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AMBARVALIA.



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POEMS

BY THOMAS BURBIDGE

AND

ARTHUR H. CLOUGH.

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POEMS

BY

ARTHUR H. CLOUGH.



THE human spirits saw I on a day,
Sitting and looking each a different way ;
And hardly tasking, subtly questioning,
Another spirit went around the ring
To each and each : and as he ceased his say,
Each after each, I heard them singly sing,
Some querulously high, some softly, sadly low,
We know not,—what avails to know ?
We know not,—wherefore need we know ?
This answer gave they still unto his suing,
We know not, let us do as we are doing.

Dost thou not know that these things only seem ?—
I know not, let me dream my dream.
Are dust and ashes fit to make a treasure ?—
I know not, let me take my pleasure.
What shall avail the knowledge thou hast sought ?—
I know not, let me think my thought.

What is the end of strife ?—

I know not, let me live my life.

How many days or e'er thou mean'st to move ?—

I know not, let me love my love.

Were not things old once new ?—

I know not, let me do as others do.

And when the rest were over past,

I know not, I will do my duty, said the last.

Thy duty do ? rejoined the voice,

Ah do it, do it, and rejoice ;

But shalt thou then, when all is done,

Enjoy a love, embrace a beauty

Like these, that may be seen and won

In life, whose course will then be run ;

Or wilt thou be where there is none ?

I know not, I will do my duty.

And taking up the word around, above, below,

Some querulously high, some softly, sadly low,

We know not, sang they all, nor ever need we know !

We know not, sang they, what avails to know ?

Whereat the questioning spirit, some short space,

Though unabashed, stood quiet in his place.

But as the echoing chorus died away

And to their dreams the rest returned apace,

By the one spirit I saw him kneeling low,
 And in a silvery whisper heard him say :
 Truly, thou knowst not, and thou needst not know ;
 Hope only, hope thou, and believe away ;
 I also know not, and I need not know,
 Only with questionings pass I to and fro,
 Perplexing these that sleep, and in their folly
 Imbreeding doubt and sceptic melancholy ;
 Till that their dreams deserting, they with me,
 Come all to this true ignorance and thee.

I.

AH, what is love, our love, she said,
 Ah, what is human love ?
 A fire, of earthly fuel fed,
 Full fain to soar above.
 With lambent flame the void it lips,
 And of the impassive air
 Would frame for its ambitious steps
 A heaven-attaining stair.
 It wrestles and it climbs—Ah me,
 Go look in little space,
 White ash on blackened earth will be
 Sole record of its place.

II.

Ah love, high love, she said and sighed,
 She said, the Poet's love !
 A star upon a turbid tide,
 Reflected from above.
 A marvel here, a glory there,
 But clouds will intervene,
 And garish earthly noon outglare
 The purity serene.

I GIVE thee joy ! O worthy word !
Congratulate—A courtier fine,
 Transacts, politely shuffling by,
 The civil ceremonial lie,
 Which, quickly spoken, barely heard,
 Can never hope, nor e'en design
 To give thee joy !

I give thee joy ! O faithful word !
 When heart with heart, and mind with mind
 Shake-hands ; and eyes in outward sign
 Of inward vision, rest in thine ;
 And feelings simply, truly stirred,
 Emphatic utterance seek to find,
 And give thee joy !

I give thee joy ! O word of power !
 Believe, though slight the tie in sooth,
 When heart to heart its fountain opes
 The plant to water that with hopes
 Is budding for fruition's flower—
 The word, potential made, in truth
 Shall give thee joy !

Shall give thee joy ! Oh, not in vain,
 For erring child the mother's prayer ;
 The sigh, wherein a martyr's breath
 Exhales from ignominious death
 For some lost cause ! In humbler strain
 Shall this poor word a virtue bear,
 And give thee joy !

WHEN panting sighs the bosom fill,
 And hands by chance united thrill
 At once with one delicious pain
 The pulses and the nerves of twain ;
 When eyes that erst could meet with ease,
 Do seek, yet, seeking, shyly shun
 Extatic conscious unison,—
 The sure beginnings, say, be these,

Prelusive to the strain of love
Which angels sing in heaven above ?

Or is it but the vulgar tune,
Which all that breathe beneath the moon
So accurately learn—so soon ?
With variations duly blent ;
Yet that same song to all intent,
Set for the finer instrument ;
It is ; and it would sound the same
In beasts, were not the bestial frame,
Less subtly organised, to blame ;
And but that soul and spirit add
To pleasures, even base and bad,
A zest the soulless never had.

It may be—well indeed I deem ;
But what if sympathy, it seem,
And admiration and esteem,
Commingling therewithal, do make
The passion prized for Reason's sake ?
Yet, when my heart would fain rejoice,
A small expostulating voice
Falls in : Of this thou wilt not take
Thy one irrevocable choice ?
In accent tremulous and thin

I hear high Prudence deep within,
 Pleading the bitter, bitter sting,
 Should slow-maturing seasons bring,
 Too late, the veritable thing.
 For if (the Poet's tale of bliss)
 A love, wherewith commensured this
 Is weak, and beggarly, and none,
 Exist a treasure to be won,
 And if the vision, though it stay,
 Be yet for an appointed day,—
 This choice, if made, this deed, if done,
 The memory of this present past,
 With vague foreboding might o'ercast
 The heart, or madden it at last.

Let Reason first her office ply ;
 Esteem, and admiration high,
 And mental, moral sympathy,
 Exist they first, nor be they brought
 By self-deceiving afterthought,—
 What if an halo interfuse
 With these again its opal hues,
 That all o'erspreading and o'erlying,
 Transmuting, mingling, glorifying,
 About the beauteous various whole,
 With beaming smile do dance and quiver ;

Yet, is that halo of the soul ?—
 Or is it, as may sure be said,
 Phosphoric exhalation bred
 Of vapour, steaming from the bed
 Of Fancy's brook, or Passion's river ?
 So when, as will be by-and-bye,
 The stream is waterless and dry,
 This halo and its hues will die ;
 And though the soul contented rest
 With those substantial blessings blest,
 Will not a longing, half-confest,
 Betray that this is not the love,
 The gift for which all gifts above
 Him praise we, Who is Love, the giver ?

I cannot say—the things are good :
 Bread is it, if not angels' food ;
 But Love ? Alas ! I cannot say ;
 A glory on the vision lay ;
 A light of more than mortal day
 About it played, upon it rested ;
 It did not, faltering and weak,
 Beg Reason on its side to speak :
 Itself was Reason, or, if not,
 Such substitute as is, I wot,
 Of seraph-kind the loftier lot ;—

Itself was of itself attested ;—
 To processes that, hard and dry,
 Elaborate truth from fallacy,
 With modes intuitive succeeding,
 Including those and superseding ;
 Reason sublimed and Love most high
 It was, a life that cannot die,
 A dream of glory most exceeding.

As, at a railway junction, men
 Who came together, taking then
 One the train up, one down, again

Meet never ! Ah, much more as they
 Who take one street's two sides, and say
 Hard parting words, but walk one way :

Though moving other mates between,
 While carts and coaches intervene,
 Each to the other goes unseen,

Yet seldom, surely, shall there lack
 Knowledge they walk not back to back,
 But with an unity of track,

Where common dangers each attend,
 And common hopes their guidance lend
 To light them to the self-same end.

Whether he then shall cross to thee,
 Or thou go thither, or it be
 Some midway point, ye yet shall see

Each other, yet again shall meet.
 Ah, joy ! when with the closing street,
 Forgivingly at last ye greet !

COMMEMORATION SONNETS.

OXFORD, 1844.

I.

AMIDST the fleeting many unforgot,
 O Leonina ! whether thou wert seen
 Singling, upon the Isis' margent green,
 From meaner flowers the frail forget-me-not,
 Or, as the picture of a saintly queen,
 Sitting, uplifting, betwixt fingers small,
 A sceptre of the water-iris tall,
 With pendent lily crowned of golden sheen ;

So, or in gay and gorgeous gallery,
 Where, amid splendours, like to those that far
 Flame backward from the sun's invisible car,
 Thou lookedst forth, as there the evening star ;
 Oh, Leonina ! fair wert thou to see,
 And unforgotten shall thine image be.

II.

THOU whom thy dangles have ere this forgot,
 O Leonina ! whether thou wert seen
 Waiting, upon the Isis' margent green,
 The boats that should have passed there and did not ;
 Or at the ball, admiring crowds between,
 To partner academical and slow
 Teaching, upon the light Slavonic toe,
 Polkas that were not, only should have been ;
 Or, in the crowded gallery crushed, didst hear
 For bonnets white, blue, pink, the ladies' cheer
 Multiplied while divided, and endure
 (Thyself being seen) to see, not hear, rehearse
 The long, long Proses, and the Latin Verse—
 O Leonina ! thou wert tired, I 'm sure.

III.

NOT in thy robes of royal rich array,
 As when thy state at Dresden thou art keeping ;
 Nor with the golden epaulettes outpeeping
 From under pink and scarlet trappings gay
 (Raiment of doctors) through the area led ;
 While galleries peal applause, and Phillimore
 For the supreme superlative cons-o'er
 The common-place-book of his classic head ;
 Uncrowned thou com'st, alone, or with a tribe
 Of volant varlets scattering jest and jibe
 Almost beside thee. Yet to thee, when rent
 Was the Teutonic Cæsar's robe, there went
 One portion : and with Julius, thou to-day
 Canst boast, I came, I saw, I went away !

COME back again, my olden heart !—

Ah, fickle spirit and untrue,

I bade the only guide depart

Whose faithfulness I surely knew :

I said, my heart is all too soft ;

He who would climb and soar aloft,

Must needs keep ever at his side

The tonic of a wholesome pride.

Come back again, my olden heart !—

Alas, I called not then for thee ;

I called for Courage, and apart

From Pride if Courage could not be,

Then welcome, Pride ! and I shall find

In thee a power to lift the mind

This low and grovelling joy above—

'Tis but the proud can truly love.

Come back again, my olden heart !—

With incrustations of the years

Uncased as yet,—as then thou wert,

Full-filled with shame and coward fears :

Wherewith, amidst a jostling throng

Of deeds, that each and all were wrong,

The doubting soul, from day to day,

Uneasy paralytic lay.

Come back again, my olden heart !

I said, Perceptions contradict,

Convictions come, anon depart,

And but themselves as false convict.

Assumptions hasty, crude, and vain,

Full oft to use will Science deign ;

The corks the novice plies to-day

The swimmer soon shall cast away.

Come back again, my olden heart !

I said, Behold, I perish quite,
Unless to give me strength to start,
I make myself my rule of right :
It must be, if I act at all,
To save my shame I have at call
The plea of all men understood,
Because I willed it, it is good.

Come back again, my olden heart !

I know not if in very deed
This means alone could aid impart
To serve my sickly spirit's need ;
But clear alike of wild self-will,
And fear that faltered, paltered still,
Remorseful thoughts of after days
A way espy betwixt the ways.

Come back again, old heart ! Ah me !

Methinks in those thy coward fears
There might, perchance, a courage be,
That fails in these the manlier years ;
Courage to let the courage sink,
Itself a coward base to think,
Rather than not for heavenly light
Wait on to show the truly right.

WHEN soft September brings again
 To yonder gorse its golden glow,
 And Snowdon sends its autumn rain
 To bid thy current livelier flow ;
 Amid that ashen foliage light
 When scarlet beads are glistening bright,
 While alder boughs unchanged are seen
 In summer livery of green ;
 When clouds before the cooler breeze
 Are flying, white and large ; with these
 Returning, so may I return,
 And find thee changeless, Pont-y-wern.

OH, ask not what is love, she said,
 Or ask it not of me ;
 Or of the heart, or of the head,
 Or if at all it be.

Oh, ask it not, she said, she said,
 Thou winn'st not word from me !
 —Oh, silent as the long long dead,
 I, Lady, learn of thee.

I ask,—thou speakest not,—and still
 I ask, and look to thee ;
 And lo, without or with a will,
 The answer is in me.

Without thy will it came to me ?
 Ah, with it let it stay ;
 Ah, with it, yes, abide in me,
 Nor only for to-day !

Thou claim'st it ? nay, the deed is done ;
 Ah, leave it with thy leave ;
 And thou a thousand loves for one
 Shalt day on day receive !

LIGHT words they were, and lightly, falsely said ;
 She heard them, and she started,—and she rose,
 As in the act to speak ; the sudden thought
 And unconsidered impulse led her on.
 In act to speak she rose, but with the sense
 Of all the eyes of that mixed company
 Now suddenly turned upon her, some with age

Hardened and dulled, some cold and critical ;
 Some in whom vapours of their own conceit,
 As moist malarious mists the heavenly stars,
 Still blotted out their good, the best at best
 By frivolous laugh and prate conventional
 All too untuned for all she thought to say—
 With such a thought the mantling blood to her cheek
 Flushed-up, and o'er-flushed itself, blank night her soul
 Made dark, and in her all her purpose swooned.
 She stood as if for sinking. Yet anon
 With recollections clear, august, sublime,
 Of God's great truth, and right immutable,
 Which, as obedient vassals, to her mind
 Came summoned of her will, in self-negation
 Quelling her troublous earthy consciousness,
 She queened it o'er her weakness. At the spell
 Back rolled the ruddy tide, and leaves her cheek
 Paler than erst, and yet not ebbs so far
 But that one pulse of one indignant thought
 Might hurry it hither in flood. So as she stood
 She spoke. God in her spoke, and made her heard.

Qui laborat, orat.

O ONLY Source of all our light and life,
 Whom as our truth, our strength, we see and feel,
 But whom the hours of mortal moral strife
 Alone aright reveal !

Mine inmost soul, before Thee inly brought,
 Thy presence owns ineffable, divine ;
 Chastised each rebel self-encentered thought,
 My will adoreth Thine.

With eye down-dropt, if then this earthly mind
 Speechless abide, or speechless e'en depart ;
 Nor seek to see—for what of earthly kind,
 Can see Thee as Thou art ?—

If sure-assured 'tis but profanely bold
 In thought's abstractest forms to seem to see,
 It dare not dare the dread communion hold
 In ways unworthy Thee,

O not unowned, Thou shalt unnamed forgive,
 In worldly walks the prayerless heart prepare ;
 And if in work its life it seem to live,
 Shalt make that work be prayer.

Nor times shall lack, when while the work it plies,
 Unsummoned powers the blinding film shall part,
 And scarce by happy tears made dim, the eyes
 In recognition start.

As wills Thy will, or give or e'en forbear
 The beatific supersensual sight,
 So, with Thy blessing blest, that humbler prayer
 Approach Thee morn and night.

WITH graceful seat and skilful hand,
 Upon the fiery steed,
 Prompt at a moment to command,
 As fittest, or concede,

O Lady ! happy he whose will
 Shall manliest homage pay
 To that which yielding ever, still
 Shall in its yielding sway :

Yea, happy he, whose willing soul
 In perfect love combined
 With thine shall form one perfect whole,
 One happy heart and mind !

Fair, fair on fleeting steed to see,
 Boon Nature's child, nor less,
In gorgeous rooms, serene and free,
 'Midst etiquette and dress !

Thrice happy who, amidst the form
 And folly that must be,
Existence fresh, and true, and warm,
 Shall, Lady, own in thee !

Such dreams, in gay saloon, of days
 That shall be, 'midst the dance
And music, while I hear and gaze,
 My silent soul entrance.

As here the harp thy fingers wake
 To sounds melodious, he
To thy soul's touch shall music make,
 And his enstrengthen thee.

The notes, diverse in time and tone,
 The hearts shall image true,
That still, in some sweet ways unknown,
 Their harmonies renew.

The mazy dance, an emblem meet,
 Shall changeful life pourtray,
 Whose changes all love's music sweet
 Expressively obey.

Then shall to waltz, though unexiled,
 And polka sometimes heard,
 To songs capricious, wayward, wild,
 Be other strains preferred.

The heart that 'midst the petty strife,
 Whose ferment, day by day,
 To strange realities of life
 Converts its trifling play,—

The heart, that here pursued the right,
 Shall then, in freer air,
 Expand its wings, and drink the light
 Of life and reason there :

And quickening truth and living law,
 And large affections clear
 Shall it to heights on heights updraw,
 To holiest hope and fear.

—Ah, moralizing premature !
 And yet words half-suppress
 May find some secret thoughts ensure
 Acceptance half-confest.

Full oft concealed high meanings work ;
 And, scorning observation,
 In gay unthinking guise will lurk
 A saintly aspiration ;

No sickly thing to sit and sun
 Its puny worth, to pause
 And list, ere half the deed be done,
 Its echo—self-applause :

No idler, who its kindly cares
 To every gossip mentions,
 And at its breast a posy wears
 Of laudable intentions.

As of itself, of others so
 Unrecognised to seek
 Its aim content, and in the flow
 Of life and spirits meek.

When Israel came out of Egypt.

Lo, here is God, and there is God !

Believe it not, O man ;

In such vain sort to this and that

The ancient heathen ran :

Though old Religion shake her head,

And say in bitter grief,

The day behold, at first foretold,

Of atheist unbelief :

Take better part, with manly heart,

Thine adult spirit can ;

Receive it not, believe it not,

Believe it not, O Man !

As men at dead of night awaked

With cries, “ The king is here,”

Rush forth and greet whome’er they meet,

Whoe’er shall first appear ;

And still repeat, to all the street,

“ ’Tis he,—the king is here ;”

The long procession moveth on,

Each nobler form they see

With changeful suit they still salute,

And cry, “ ’Tis he, ’tis he ! ”

So, even so, when men were young,
 And earth and heaven was new,
 And His immediate presence He
 From human hearts withdrew,
 The soul perplexed and daily vexed
 With sensuous False and True,
 Amazed, bereaved, no less believed,
 And fain would see Him too :
 He is ! the prophet-tongues proclaimed ;
 In joy and hasty fear,
 He is ! aloud replied the crowd,
 Is, here, and here, and here.

He is ! They are ! in distance seen
 On yon Olympus high,
 In those Avernian woods abide,
 And walk this azure sky :
 They are, They are ! to every show
 Its eyes the baby turned,
 And blazes sacrificial tall
 On thousand altars burned :
 They are, They are !—On Sinai's top
 Far seen the lightnings shone,
 The thunder broke, a trumpet spoke,
 And God said, I am One.

God spake it out, I, God, am One ;
 The unheeding ages ran,
 And baby-thoughts again, again,
 Have dogged the growing man :
 And as of old from Sinai's top
 God said that God is One,
 By Science strict so speaks He now
 To tell us, There is None !
 Earth goes by chemic forces ; Heaven 's
 A Mécanique Celeste !
 And heart and mind of human kind
 A watch-work as the rest !

Is this a Voice, as was the Voice
 Whose speaking spoke abroad,
 When thunder pealed, and mountain reeled,
 The ancient Truth of God ?
 Ah, not the Voice ; 'tis but the cloud,
 The cloud of darkness dense,
 Where image none, nor e'er was seen
 Similitude of sense.
 'Tis but the cloudy darkness dense
 That wrapt the Mount around ;
 With dull amaze the people stays,
 And doubts the Coming Sound.

Some chosen prophet-soul the while
 Shall dare, sublimely meek,
 Within the shroud of blackest cloud
 The Deity to seek :
 'Midst atheistic systems dark,
 And darker hearts' despair,
 That soul has heard his very word,
 And on the dusky air
 His skirts, as passed He by, to see
 Has strained on their behalf,
 Who on the plain, with dance amain,
 Adore the Golden Calf.

'Tis but the cloudy darkness dense ;
 Though blank the tale it tells,
 No God, no Truth ! yet He, in sooth,
 Is there—within it dwells ;
 Within the sceptic darkness deep
 He dwells that none may see,
 Till idol forms and idol thoughts
 Have passed and ceased to be :
 No God, no Truth ! ah though, in sooth,
 So stand the doctrine's half ;
 On Egypt's track return not back,
 Nor own the Golden Calf.

Take better part, with manlier heart,
 Thine adult spirit can ;
 No God, no Truth, receive it ne'er—
 Believe it ne'er—O Man !
 But turn not then to seek again
 What first the ill began ;
 No God, it saith ; ah, wait in faith
 God's self-completing plan ;
 Receive it not, but leave it not,
 And wait it out, O Man !

The Man that went the cloud within
 Is gone and vanished quite ;
 He cometh not, the people cries,
 Nor bringeth God to sight :
 Lo these thy gods, that safety give,
 Adore and keep the feast !
 Deluding and deluded cries
 The Prophet's brother-Priest :
 And Israel all bows down to fall
 Before the gilded beast.

Devout, indeed ! that priestly creed,
 O Man, reject as sin ;
 The clouded hill attend thou still,
 And him that went within.

He yet shall bring some worthy thing
 For waiting souls to see ;
 Some sacred word that he hath heard
 Their light and life shall be ;
 Some lofty part, than which the heart
 Adopt no nobler can,
 Thou shalt receive, thou shalt believe,
 And thou shalt do, O Man !

THE Silver Wedding ! on some pensive ear
 From towers remote as sound the silvery bells,
 To-day from one far unforgotten year
 A silvery faint memorial music swells.

And silver-pale the dim memorial light
 Of musing age on youthful joys is shed,
 The golden joys of fancy's dawning bright,
 The golden bliss of, Woo'd, and won, and wed

Ah, golden then, but silver now ! In sooth,
 The years that pale the cheek, that dim the eyes,
 And silver o'er the golden hairs of youth,
 Less prized can make its only priceless prize.

Not so ; the voice this silver name that gave
 To this, the ripe and unenfeebled date,

For steps together tottering to the grave,
 Hath bid the perfect golden title wait.

Rather, if silver this, if that be gold,
 From good to better changed an age's track,
 Must it as baser metal be enrolled,
 That day of days, a quarter-century back.

Yet ah, its hopes, its joys were golden too,
 But golden of the fairy gold of dreams :
 To feel is but to dream ; until we do,
 There 's nought that is, and all we see but seems.

What was or seemed it needed cares and tears,
 And deeds together done, and trials past,
 And all the subtlest alchemy of years
 To change to genuine substance here at last.

Your fairy gold is silver sure to day ;
 Your ore by crosses many, many a loss,
 As in refiners' fires, hath purged away
 What erst it had of earthy human dross.

Come years as many yet, and as they go
 In human life's great crucible shall they
 Transmute, so potent are the spells they know,
 Into pure gold the silver of to-day.

Strange metallurge is human life ! 'Tis true ;
 And Use and Wont in many a gorgeous case
 Full specious fair for casual outward view
 Electrotpe the sordid and the base.

Nor lack who praise, avowed, the spurious ware,
 Who bid young hearts the one true love forego,
 Conceit to feed, or fancy light as air,
 Or greed of pelf and precedence and show.

True, false, as one to casual eyes appear,
 To read men truly men may hardly learn ;
 Yet doubt it not that wariest glance would here
 Faith, Hope and Love, the true Tower-stamp discern.

Come years again ! as many yet ! and purge
 Less precious earthier elements away,
 And gently changed at life's extremest verge,
 Bring bright in gold your perfect fiftieth day !

That sight may children see and parents show !
 If not—yet earthly chains of metal true,
 By love and duty wrought and fixed below,
 Elsewhere will shine, transformed, celestial-new ;

Will shine of gold, whose essence, heavenly bright,
 No doubt-damps tarnish, worldly passions fray ;
 Gold into gold there mirrored, light in light,
 Shall gleam in glories of a deathless day.

I.

WHY should I say I see the things I see not,
 Why be and be not ?
 Show love for that I love not, and fear for what I fear not ?
 And dance about to music that I hear not ?
 Who standeth still i' the street
 Shall be hustled and justled about ;
 And he that stops i' the dance shall be spurned by the
 dancers' feet,—
 Shall be shoved and be twisted by all he shall meet,
 And shall raise up an outcry and rout ;
 And the partner, too,—
 What 's the partner to do ?
 While all the while 'tis but, perchance, an humming in
 mine ear,
 That yet anon shall hear,
 And I anon, the music in my soul,
 In a moment read the whole ;
 The music in my heart,
 Joyously take my part,

And hand in hand, and heart with heart, with these
 retreat, advance ;
 And borne on wings of wavy sound,
 Whirl with these around, around,
 Who here are living in the living dance !
 Why forfeit that fair chance ?
 Till that arrive, till thou awake,
 Of these, my soul, thy music make,
 And keep amid the throng,
 And turn as they shall turn, and bound as they are
 bounding,—
 Alas ! alas ! alas ! and what if all along
 The music is not sounding ?

II.

• Are there not, then, two musics unto men ?—
 One loud and bold and coarse,
 And overpowering still perforce
 All tone and tune beside ;
 Yet in despite its pride
 Only of fumes of foolish fancy bred,
 And sounding solely in the sounding head :
 The other, soft and low,
 Stealing whence we not know,
 Painfully heard, and easily forgot,
 With pauses oft and many a silence strange,

(And silent oft it seems, when silent it is not)
 Revivals too of unexpected change :
 Haply thou think'st 'twill never be begun,
 Or that 't has come, and been, and past away ;

Yet turn to other none,—

Turn not, oh, turn not thou !

But listen, listen, listen,—if haply be heard it may ;
 Listen, listen, listen,—is it not sounding now ?

III.

Yea, and as thought of some beloved friend
 By death or distance parted will descend,
 Severing, in crowded rooms ablaze with light,
 As by a magic screen, the seër from the sight,
 (Palsying the nerves that intervene
 The eye and central sense between ;)

So may the ear,

Hearing, not hear,

Though drums do roll, and pipes and cymbals ring ;
 So the bare conscience of the better thing
 Unfelt, unseen, unimaged, all unknown,
 May fix the entrancèd soul mid multitudes alone.

SWEET streamlet bason ! at thy side
Weary and faint within me cried
My longing heart,—In such pure deep
How sweet it were to sit and sleep ;
To feel each passage from without
Close up,—above me and about,
Those circling waters crystal clear,
That calm impervious atmosphere !
There on thy pearly pavement pure
To lean, and feel myself secure,
Or through the dim-lit inter-space,
Afar at whiles upgazing trace
The dimpling bubbles dance around
Upon thy smooth exterior face ;
Or idly list the dreamy sound
Of ripples lightly flung, above
That home, of peace, if not of love.

AWAY, haunt not thou me,
 Thou vain Philosophy !
 Little hast thou bestead,
 Save to perplex the head,
 And leave the spirit dead.
 Unto thy broken cisterns wherefore go,
 While from the secret treasure-depths below,
 Fed by the skiey shower,
 And clouds that sink and rest on hill-tops high,
 Wisdom at once, and Power,
 Are welling, bubbling forth, unseen, incessantly ?
 Why labour at the dull mechanic oar,
 When the fresh breeze is blowing.
 And the strong current flowing,
 Right onward to the Eternal Shore ?

MY wind is turned to bitter north,
 That was so soft a south before ;
 My sky, that shone so sunny bright,
 With foggy gloom is clouded o'er :

My gay green leaves are yellow-black,
 Upon the dank autumnal floor ;
 For love, departed once, comes back
 No more again, no more.

A roofless ruin lies my home,
 For winds to blow and rains to pour ;
 One frosty night befell, and lo,
 I find my summer days are o'er :
 The heart bereaved, of why and how
 Unknowing, knows that yet before
 It had what e'en to Memory now
 Returns no more, no more.

Look you, my simple friend, 'tis one of those,
 (Alack, a common weed of our ill time),
 Who, do whate'er they may, go where they will,
 Must needs still carry about the looking-glass
 Of vain philosophy. And if so be
 That some small natural gesture shall escape them,
 (Nature will out) straightway about they turn,
 And con it duly there, and note it down,
 With inward glee and much complacent chuckling,
 Part in conceit of their superior science,

Part in forevision of the attentive look
 And laughing glance that may one time reward them,
 When the fresh ore, this day dug up, at last
 Shall, thrice refined and purified, from the mint
 Of conversation intellectual
 Into the golden currency of wit
 Issue—satirical or pointed sentence,
 Impromptu, epigram, or it may be sonnet,
 Heir undisputed to the pinkiest page
 In the album of a literary lady.

And can it be, you ask me, that a man,
 With the strong arm, the cunning faculties,
 And keenest forethought gifted, and, within,
 Longings unspeakable, the lingering echoes
 Responsive to the still-still-calling voice
 Of God Most High,—should disregard all these,
 And half-employ all those for such an aim
 As the light sympathy of successful wit,
 Vain titillation of a moment's praise ?
 Why, so is good no longer good, but crime
 Our truest, best advantage, since it lifts us
 Out of the stifling gas of men's opinion
 Into the vital atmosphere of Truth,
 Where He again is visible, tho' in anger.

THOUGHT may well be ever ranging,
 And opinion ever changing,
 Task-work be, though ill begun,
 Dealt with by experience better ;
 By the law and by the letter
 Duty done is duty done :
 Do it, Time is on the wing !

Hearts, 'tis quite another thing,
 Must or once for all be given,
 Or must not at all be given ;
 Hearts, 'tis quite another thing !

To bestow the soul away
 In an idle duty-play !—
 Why, to trust a life-long bliss
 To caprices of a day,
 Scarce were more depraved than this !

Men and maidens, see you mind it ;
 Show of love, where'er you find it,
 Look if duty lurk behind it !
 Duty-fancies, urging on
 Whither love had never gone !

Loving—if the answering breast
 Seem not to be thus possessed,

Still in hoping have a care ;
 If it do, beware, beware !
 But if in yourself you find it,
 Above all things—mind it, mind it !

DUTY—that 's to say complying
 With whate'er 's expected here ;
 On your unknown cousin's dying,
 Straight be ready with the tear ;
 Upon etiquette relying,
 Unto usage nought denying,
 Lend your waist to be embraced,
 Blush not even, never fear ;
 Claims of kith and kin connection,
 Claims of manners honour still,
 Ready money of affection
 Pay, whoever drew the bill.
 With the form conforming duly,
 Senseless what it meaneth truly,
 Go to church—the world require you,
 To balls—the world require you too,
 And marry—papa and mama desire you,
 And your sisters and schoolfellows do.
 Duty—'tis to take on trust
 What things are good, and right, and just ;

And whether indeed they be or be not,
 Try not, test not, feel not, see not :
 'Tis walk and dance, sit down and rise
 By leading, opening ne'er your eyes ;
 Stunt sturdy limbs that Nature gave,
 And be drawn in a Bath chair along to the grave.

'Tis the stern and prompt suppressing,
 As an obvious deadly sin,
 All the questing and the guessing
 Of the soul's own soul within :
 'Tis the coward acquiescence
 In a destiny's behest,
 To a shade by terror made,
 Sacrificing, aye, the essence
 Of all that 's truest, noblest, best :
 'Tis the blind non-recognition
 Either of goodness, truth, or beauty,
 Except by precept and submission ;
 Moral blank, and moral void,
 Life at very birth destroyed,
 Atrophy, exinanition !
 Duty !—————
 Yea, by duty's prime condition
 Pure nonentity of duty !

*“Blank Misgivings of a Creature moving about
in Worlds not realised.”*

I.

HERE am I yet, another twelvemonth spent,
One-third departed of the mortal span,
Carrying on the child into the man,
Nothing into reality. Sails rent,
And rudder broken,—reason impotent,—
Affections all unfixed ; so forth I fare
On the mid seas unheedingly, so dare
To do and to be done by, well content.
So was it from the first, so is it yet ;
Yea, the first kiss that by these lips was set
On any human lips, methinks was sin—
Sin, cowardice, and falsehood ; for the will
Into a deed e’en then advanced, wherein
God, unidentified, was thought-of still.

II.

Though to the vilest things beneath the moon
For poor Ease’ sake I give away my heart,
And for the moment’s sympathy let part
My sight and sense of truth, Thy precious boon,

My painful earnings, lost, all lost, as soon,
 Almost, as gained : and though aside I start,
 Belie Thee daily, hourly,—still Thou art,
 Art surely as in heaven the sun at noon :
 How much so e'er I sin, whate'er I do
 Of evil, still the sky above is blue,
 The stars look down in beauty as before :
 Is it enough to walk as best we may,
 To walk, and sighing, dream of that blest day
 When ill we cannot quell shall be no more ?

III.

Well, well,—Heaven bless you all from day to day !
 Forgiveness too, or e'er we part, from each,
 As I do give it, so must I beseech :
 I owe all much, much more than I can pay ;
 Therefore it is I go ; how could I stay
 Where every look commits me to fresh debt,
 And to pay little I must borrow yet ?
 Enough of this already, now away !
 With silent woods and hills untenanted
 Let me go commune ; under thy sweet gloom,
 O kind maternal Darkness, hide my head :
 The day may come I yet may re-assume
 My place, and, these tired limbs recruited, seek
 The task for which I now am all too weak.

IV.

Yes, I have lied, and so must walk my way,
 Bearing the liar's curse upon my head ;
 Letting my weak and sickly heart be fed
 On food which does the present craving stay,
 But may be clean-denied me e'en to-day,
 And tho' 'twere certain, yet were ought but bread ;
 Letting—for so they say, it seems, I said,
 And I am all too weak to disobey !
 Therefore for me sweet Nature's scenes reveal not
 Their charm ; sweet Music greets me and I feel not ;
 Sweet eyes pass off me uninspired ; yea, more,
 The golden tide of opportunity
 Flows wafting-in friendships and better,—I
 Unseeing, listless, pace along the shore.

V.

How often sit I, poring o'er
 My strange distorted youth,
 Seeking in vain, in all my store,
 One feeling based on truth ;
 Amid the maze of petty life
 A clue whereby to move,
 A spot whereon in toil and strife
 To dare to rest and love.

So constant as my heart would be,
 So fickle as it must,
 'Twere well for others as for me
 'Twere dry as summer dust.
 Excitements come, and act and speech
 Flow freely forth ;—but no,
 Nor they, nor ought beside can reach
 The buried world below.

VI.

—— Like a child

In some strange garden left awhile alone,
 I pace about the pathways of the world,
 Plucking light hopes and joys from every stem,
 With qualms of vague misgiving in my heart
 That payment at the last will be required,
 Payment I cannot make, or guilt incurred,
 And shame to be endured.

VII.

—— Roused by importunate knocks

I rose, I turned the key, and let them in,
 First one, anon another, and at length
 In troops they came ; for how could I, who once
 Had let in one, nor looked him in the face,
 Show scruples e'er again ? So in they came,

A noisy band of revellers,—vain hopes,
 Wild fancies, fitful joys ; and there they sit
 In my heart's holy place, and through the night
 Carouse, to leave it when the cold grey dawn
 Gleams from the East, to tell me that the time
 For watching and for thought bestowed is gone.

VIII.

O kind protecting Darkness ! as a child
 Flies back to bury in his mother's lap
 His shame and his confusion, so to thee,
 O Mother Night, come I ! within the folds
 Of thy dark robe hide thou me close ; for I
 So long, so heedless, with external things
 Have played the liar, that whate'er I see,
 E'en these white glimmering curtains, yon bright stars,
 Which to the rest rain comfort down, for me
 Smiling those smiles, which I may not return,
 Or frowning frowns of fierce triumphant malice,
 As angry claimants or expectants sure
 Of that I promised and may not perform
 Look me in the face ! O hide me, Mother Night !

IX.

ONCE more the wonted road I tread,
 Once more dark heavens above me spread,

Upon the windy down I stand,
 My station, whence the circling land
 Lies mapped and pictured wide below ;—
 Such as it was, such e'en again,
 Long dreary bank, and breadth of plain
 By hedge or tree unbroken ;—lo,
 A few grey woods can only show
 How vain their aid, and in the sense
 Of one unaltering impotence,
 Relieving not, meseems enhance
 The sovereign dulness of the expanse.
 Yet marks where human hand hath been,
 Bare house, unsheltered village, space
 Of ploughed and fenceless tilth between
 (Such aspect as methinks may be
 In some half-settled colony),
 From Nature vindicate the scene ;
 A wide, and yet disheartening view,
 A melancholy world.

'Tis true,

Most true ; and yet, like those strange smiles
 By fervent hope or tender thought
 From distant happy regions brought,
 Which upon some sick bed are seen
 To glorify a pale worn face
 With sudden beauty,—so at whiles

Lights have descended, hues have been,
 To clothe with half-celestial grace
 The bareness of the desert place.

Since so it is, so be it still !
 Could only thou, my heart, be taught
 To treasure, and in act fulfil
 The lesson which the sight has brought ;
 In thine own dull and dreary state
 To work and patiently to wait :
 Little thou think'st in thy despair
 How soon the o'ershaded sun may shine,
 And e'en the dulling clouds combine
 To bless with lights and hues divine
 That region desolate and bare,
 Those sad and sinful thoughts of thine !

Still doth the coward heart complain ;
 The hour may come, and come in vain ;
 The branch that withered lies and dead
 No suns can force to lift its head.
 True !—yet how little thou canst tell
 How much in thee is ill or well ;
 Nor for thy neighbour, nor for thee,
 Be sure, was life designed to be
 A draught of dull complacency.
 One Power too is it, who doth give

The food without us, and within
 The strength that makes it nutritive :
 He bids the dry bones rise and live,
 And e'en in hearts depraved to sin
 Some sudden, gracious influence,
 May give the long-lost good again,
 And wake within the dormant sense
 And love of good ;—for mortal men,
 So but thou strive, thou soon shalt see
 Defeat itself is victory.

So be it : yet, O Good and Great,
 In whom in this bedarkened state
 I fain am struggling to believe,
 Let me not ever cease to grieve,
 Nor lose the consciousness of ill
 Within me ;—and refusing still
 To recognise in things around
 What cannot truly there be found,
 Let me not feel, nor be it true,
 That while each daily task I do
 I still am giving day by day
 My precious things within away,
 (Those thou didst give to keep as thine)
 And casting, do whate'er I may,
 My heavenly pearls to earthly swine.

x.

I HAVE seen higher holier things than these,
And therefore must to these refuse my heart,
Yet am I panting for a little ease ;
I'll take, and so depart.

Ah hold ! the heart is prone to fall away,
Her high and cherished visions to forget,
And if thou takest, how wilt thou repay
So vast, so dread a debt ?

How will the heart, which now thou trustest, then
Corrupt, yet in corruption mindful yet,
Turn with sharp stings upon itself ! Again,
Bethink thee of the debt !

—Hast thou seen higher holier things than these,
And therefore must to these thy heart refuse ?
With the true best, alack, how ill agrees
That best that thou wouldst choose !

The Summum Pulchrum rests in heaven above ;
Do thou, as best thou may'st, thy duty do :
Amid the things allowed thee live and love ;
Some day thou shalt it view.

Qua cursum ventus.

As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay
 With canvass drooping, side by side,
 Two towers of sail at dawn of day
 Are scarce long leagues apart descried ;

When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,
 And all the darkling hours they plied,
 Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas
 By each was cleaving, side by side :

E'en so—but why the tale reveal
 Of those, whom year by year unchanged,
 Brief absence joined anew to feel,
 Astounded, soul from soul estranged.

At dead of night their sails were filled,
 And onward each rejoicing steered—
 Ah, neither blame, for neither willed,
 Or wist, what first with dawn appeared !

To veer, how vain ! On, onward strain,
 Brave barks ! In light, in darkness too,
 Through winds and tides one compass guides—
 To that, and your own selves, be true.

But O blithe breeze ! and O great seas,
 Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
 On your wide plain they join again,
 Together lead them home at last.

One port, methought, alike they sought,
 One purpose hold where'er they fare,—
 O bounding breeze, O rushing seas !
 At last, at last, unite them there !

ALCAICS.

So spake the Voice ; and, as with a single life
 Instinct, the whole mass, fierce, irretainable,
 Down on that unsuspecting host swept
 Down, with the fury of winds that all night
 Up-brimming, sapping slowly the dyke, at dawn
 Full through the breach, o'er homestead, and harvest, and
 Herd roll a deluge ; while the milkmaid
 Trips i' the dew, and remissly guiding
 Morn's first uneven furrow, the farmer's boy
 Dreams out his dream : so over the multitude
 Safe-tented, uncontrolled and uncon-
 trollably sped the Avenger's fury.

Natura naturans.

BESIDE me,—in the car,—she sat,
 She spake not, no, nor looked to me :
 From her to me, from me to her,
 What passed so subtly stealthily ?
 As rose to rose that by it blows
 Its interchanged aroma flings ;
 Or wake to sound of one sweet note
 The virtues of disparted strings.

Beside me, nought but this !—but this,
 That influent as within me dwelt
 Her life, mine too within her breast,
 Her brain, her every limb she felt :
 We sat ; while o'er and in us, more
 And more, a power unknown prevailed,
 Inhaling, and inhaled,—and still
 'Twas one, inhaling or inhaled.

Beside me, nought but this ;—and passed ;
 I passed ; and know not to this day
 If gold or jet her girlish hair,
 If black, or brown, or lucid-grey

Her eye's young glance : the fickle chance
 That joined us, yet may join again ;
 But I no face again could greet
 As her's, whose life was in me then.

As unsuspecting mere a maid
 As, fresh in maidhood's bloomiest bloom,
 In casual second-class did e'er
 By casual youth her seat assume ;
 Or vestal, say, of saintliest clay,
 For once by balmiest airs betrayed
 Unto emotions too too sweet
 To be unlingeringly gainsaid :

Unowning then, confusing soon
 With dreamier dreams that o'er the glass
 Of shyly ripening woman-sense
 Reflected, scarce reflected, pass,
 A wife may-be, a mother she
 In Hymen's shrine recalls not now,
 She first in hour, ah, not profane,
 With me to Hymen learnt to bow.

Ah no !—Yet owned we, fused in one,
 The Power which e'en in stones and earths
 By blind elections felt, in forms
 Organic breeds to myriad births ;

By lichen small on granite wall
 Approved, its faintest feeblest stir
 Slow-spreading, strengthening long, at last
 Vibrated full in me and her.

In me and her—sensation strange !
 The lily grew to pendent head,
 To vernal airs the mossy bank
 Its sheeny primrose spangles spread,
 In roof o'er roof of shade sun-proof
 Did cedar strong itself outclimb,
 And altitude of aloe proud
 Aspire in floreal crown sublime ;

Flashed flickering forth fantastic flies,
 Big bees their burly bodies swung,
 Rooks roused with civic din the elms,
 And lark its wild reveillez rung ;
 In Libyan dell the light gazelle,
 The leopard lithe in Indian glade,
 And dolphin, brightening tropic seas,
 In us were living, leapt and played :

Their shells did slow crustacea build,
 Their gilded skins did snakes renew,
 While mightier spines for loftier kind
 Their types in amplest limbs outgrew ;

Yea, close compest in human breast,
 What moss, and tree, and livelier thing,
 What Earth, Sun, Star of force possest,
 Lay budding, burgeoning forth for Spring.

Such sweet preluding sense of old
 Led on in Eden's sinless place
 The hour when bodies human first
 Combined the primal prime embrace,
 Such genial heat the blissful seat
 In man and woman owned unblamed,
 When, naked both, its garden paths
 They walked unconscious, unashamed :

Ere, clouded yet in mistiest dawn,
 Above the horizon dusk and dun,
 One mountain crest with light had tipped
 That Orb that is the Spirit's Sun ;
 Ere dreamed young flowers in vernal showers
 Of fruit to rise the flower above,
 Or ever yet to young Desire
 Was told the mystic name of Love.

ὁ θεὸς μετὰ σοῦ.*

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FAREWELL, my Highland lassie ! when the year returns
 around,
 Be it Greece, or be it Norway, where my vagrant feet
 are found,
 I shall call to mind the place, I shall call to mind the
 day,
 The day that 's gone for ever, and the glen that 's far
 away ;
 I shall mind me, be it Rhine or Rhone, Italian land or
 France,
 Of the laughings, and the whispers, of the pipings and
 the dance ;
 I shall see thy soft brown eyes dilate to wakening woman
 thought,
 And whiter still the white cheek grow to which the blush
 was brought ;
 And oh, with mine commixing I thy breath of life shall
 feel,
 And clasp the shyly passive hands in joyous Highland
 reel ;

* Ho Thēos meta sou—God be with you.

I shall hear, and see, and feel, and in sequence sadly
true,

Shall repeat the bitter-sweet of the lingering last adieu ;
I shall seem as now to leave thee, with the kiss upon the
brow,

And the fervent benediction of—ὁ θεὸς μετὰ σοῦ !

Ah me, my Highland lassie ! though in winter drear
and long

Deep arose the heavy snows, and the stormy winds were
strong,

Though the rain, in summer's brightest, it were raining
every day,

With worldly comforts few and far, how glad were I to
stay !

I fall to sleep with dreams of life in some black bothie
spent,

Coarse poortith's ware thou changing there to gold of
pure content,

With barefoot lads and lassies round, and thee the cheery
wife,

In the braes of old Lochaber a laborious homely life ;
But I wake—to leave thee, smiling, with the kiss upon
the brow,

And the peaceful benediction of—ὁ θεὸς μετὰ σοῦ !

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ἐπὶ Δάτμῳ.

ON the mountain, in the woodland,
 In the shaded secret dell,
 I have seen thee, I have met thee !
 In the soft ambrosial hours of night,
 In darkness silent sweet
 I beheld thee, I was with thee,
 I was thine, and thou wert mine !

When I gazed in palace-chambers,
 When I trod the rustic dance,
 Earthly maids were fair to look on,
 Earthly maidens' hearts were kind :
 Fair to look on, fair to love :
 But the life, the life to me,
 'Twas the death, the death to them,
 In the spying, prying, prating
 Of a curious cruel world.
 At a touch, a breath they fade,
 They languish, droop, and die ;
 Yea, the juices change to sourness,
 And the tints to clammy brown ;
 And the softness unto foulness,
 And the odour unto stench.

Let alone and leave to bloom ;
 Pass aside, nor make to die,
 —In the woodland, on the mountain,
 Thou art mine, and I am thine.

So I passed.—Amid the uplands,
 In the forest, on whose skirts
 Pace unstartled, feed unfearing
 Do the roe-deer and the red,
 While I hungered, while I thirsted,
 While the night was deepest dark,
 Who was I, that thou shouldst meet me ?
 Who was I, thou didst not pass ?
 Who was I, that I should say to thee,
 Thou art mine, and I am thine ?

To the air from whence thou camest
 Thou returnest, thou art gone ;
 Self-created, dis-created,
 Re-created, ever fresh,
 Ever young !——
 As a lake its mirrored mountains
 At a moment, unregretting,
 Unresisting, unreclaiming,
 Without preface, without question,
 On the silent shifting levels

Lets depart,
 Shows, effaces and replaces !
 For what is, anon is not ;
 What has been, again 's to be ;
 Ever new and ever young
 Thou art mine, and I am thine.

Art thou she that walks the skies,
 That rides the starry night ?
 I know not———
 For my meanness dares not claim the truth,
 Thy loveliness declares.
 But the face thou show'st the world, is not
 The face thou show'st to me.
 And the look that I have looked in
 Is of none but me beheld.
 I know not ; but I know
 I am thine, and thou art mine.

And I watch : the orb behind
 As it fleeteth, faint and fair
 In the depth of azure night,
 In the violet blank, I trace
 By an outline faint and fair
 Her whom none but I beheld.
 By her orb she moveth slow,

Graceful-slow, serenely firm,
 Maiden-Goddess ! while her robe
 The adoring planets kiss.
 And I too cower and ask,
 Wert thou mine, and was I thine ?

Hath a cloud o'ercast the sky ?
 Is it cloud upon the mountain-sides
 Or haze of dewy river-banks
 Below ?—

Or around me,
 To enfold me, to conceal,
 Doth a mystic magic veil,
 A celestial separation,
 As of curtains hymeneal,
 Undiscerned yet all excluding,
 Interpose ?
 For the pine-tree boles are dimmer,
 And the stars bedimmed above ;
 In perspective brief, uncertain,
 Are the forest-alleys closed,
 And to whispers indistinctest
 The resounding torrents lulled.
 Can it be, and can it be ?
 Upon Earth and here below,
 In the woodland at my side
 Thou art with me, thou art here.

'Twas the vapour of the perfume
 Of the presence that should be,
 That enwrapt me !
 That enwraps us,
 O my Goddess, O my Queen !
 And I turn
 At thy feet to fall before thee ;
 And thou wilt not :
 At thy feet to kneel and reach and kiss thy
 finger-tips ;
 And thou wilt not :
 And I feel thine arms that stay me,
 And I feel——
 O mine own, mine own, mine own,
 I am thine, and thou art mine !

Χρυσέα κλῆς ἐπὶ γλώσσα.

IF, when in cheerless wanderings, dull and cold,
 A sense of human kindness hath found us,
 We seem to have around us
 An atmosphere all gold,
 'Mid darkest shades a halo rich of shine,
 An element, that while the bleak wind bloweth,

On the rich heart bestoweth
 Imbreathed draughts of wine ;
 Heaven guide, the cup be not, as chance may be,
 To some vain mate given up as soon as tasted !
 No, nor on thee be wasted,
 Thou trifler, Poesy !
 Heaven grant the manlier heart, that timely, ere
 Youth fly, with life's real tempest would be coping ;
 The fruit of dreamy hoping
 Is, waking, blank despair.

Is it true, ye gods, who treat us
 As the gambling fool is treated,
 O ye, who ever cheat us,
 And let us feel we 're cheated !
 Is it true that poetical power,
 The gift of heaven, the dower
 Of Apollo and the Nine,
 The inborn sense, "the vision and the faculty divine,"
 All we glorify and bless
 In our rapturous exaltation,
 All invention, and creation,
 Exuberance of fancy, and sublime imagination,

All a poet's fame is built on,
The fame of Shakespeare, Milton,
Of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley,
Is in reason's grave precision,
Nothing more, nothing less,
Than a peculiar conformation,
Constitution, and condition
Of the brain and of the belly ?
Is it true, ye gods who cheat us ?
And that 's the way ye treat us ?

Oh say it, all who think it,
Look straight, and never blink it !
If it is so, let it be so,
And we will all agree so ;
But the plot has counterplot,
It may be, and yet be not.

POEMS

BY

THOMAS BURBIDGE.

TO THE PINES OF THE CASCINE AT
FLORENCE.

January, 1840.

SWEET is your shade in summer heat,
Your screening boughs in winter sweet !
Bright are ye, noble trees ! beside
Your thickets Arno loves to glide,
A river silent in his pride,
—A lively creature from his source
He springs, and noisy as a horse
Flings up the pebbles as he strides
Adown the clamouring mountain sides ;
But silent as a brooding dove
He glides beside this cheerful grove ;
Nor calmed by years, but by the weight
Of memories terrible and great
Made silent and deliberate.

And thou too, Florence !—not too much
Hast thou received from grateful Fame,

Thy slave, if e'er the Power were such
 To aught of mortal birth that came.
 Faint as a city of the air
 In seeming, delicately fair
 In colour as the flowers of Spring,
 Thou risest, an enchanted thing,
 A pomp—a play-work of the cloud
 To which the hills this lovely plain
 Spread out, scarce hoping to retain !
 Silent, yet longing to rejoice aloud !

Fair all the scene in which I stand ;
 I sing—so Fancy doth command ;
 —But I am in a foreign land.

TO THE SAME.

June, 1848.

ONCE before this, ye sovran pines,
 When with a mighty wave ye swung,
 A thousand to one impulse flung
 Adown one wind, in trembling lines
 Your might I honoured, feebly sung

Again, but not as then, I lift
 My voice in honour of your might ;
 More bold than then—thro' wrong or right—
 I walk the world, and through the drift
 Of darkness seem to see the light.

Yes, sweet is home, and sweet is love,
 And pity is the right of boys,
 How weak soe'er ! but he employs
 My praise, him now I best approve
 Who makes the happiness he enjoys.

O sovrán trees ! in summer heat,
 In winter storms ye brightly shine ;
 With no self-discord ye repine,
 But tread your trial beneath your feet ;
 As you tread yours, will I tread mine !

THE LUCERNE LION.

IT COMMEMORATES THE FIDELITY OF LOUIS XVI.'S SWISS GUARD.

COME to this damp recess whose air with noon
 Was never warm and dry,
 Whose pining trees shine never to the moon,
 Wherever in the sleepless nights of June,
 She wander in the uncumbered sky.

Here lo ! the wounded Lion :—breathing hard
 The unconquerable Beast
 Dies on the Shield he was employed to guard ;
 From the imprisonment of his true ward
 Even by the mortal torture unreleased.

In such an emblem doth the rock unfold
 A story not to fade !
 How to a stranger for a stranger's gold
 The chance of life and life's delight was sold,
 And when 'twas forfeit, faithfully was paid.

Sad be the land—be sad and ever mourn,
 That might not see arise,
 Gladdening her silent paths at every turn,
 A votive altar whereupon should burn
 The memory of some nobler sacrifice !

PORTRAITURE.

—♦—
WITH pain her gloomy eyes did she uplift,
That Woman Old ; with many a tempest torn
Of sins and sorrows spent ere we were born,
Her sallow brow appeared, o'er which a drift
Of massive snow-white hair lay dead and still,
Or flew across, by fits, without her will.

There stood before her the enquiring Child :
On the frail lids of his uncentred eyes
Lay no weight heavier than a light surprise ;
His tresses soft, like silver undefiled,
Hung on his sunbright face, or in a floating wreath
Clouding his lips, moved mildly with his breath.

A Rock long-bearded with cold weeds marine,
In whose wet womb the ocean-creatures sleep,
Should it uplift its scalp above the deep,
Were likeliest to that hellish Woman seen ;
But he a Lily stood, caressed by eve,
And which the morning mists are loth to leave.

LAPSE.

A HEAVENLY Night!—methinks to me
 The soul of other times returns ;
 Sweet as the scents the orange-tree
 Drops in the wind-flower's scarlet urns,
 When sunset, like a city, burns
 Across the glassy midland sea.

This night gives back that double day,
 Which clothed the earth when I was young !
 A light most like some godlike lay
 By parted hero-angels sung :—
 It stirred my heart ; and through my tongue
 It passed, methought,—but passed away.

The entrancement of that time is o'er,
 A calmer, freer soul is here ;
 I dream not as I dreamed of yore,
 Awake to sin, awake to fear ;
 I own the earth,—I see, I hear,
 I feel ;—O may I dream no more !

Farewell, wild world of bygone days,
 Here let me now more safely tread !

I ask no glory's vagrant blaze,
 To dance around my shining head :
 Be peace and hope my crown instead,
 With love, God willing, for my praise !

TO AN IDIOT CHILD.

SWEET Child ! what light is in those eyes ?
 Like islands bright in sunset skies,
 Ablaze with glory overweening
 Yet cold—alive, yet dead of meaning !
 Two goats upon the rocks at play
 Not wilder as they climb and leap ;
 Yet torpid in their sense are they
 As awful mountain lakes that sleep
 Far deepening downward from the day,
 To caves a thousand fathoms deep !

O Child of love, what hath become
 Of thy sweet tongue ?—would it were dumb !
 —That now doth boisterously climb
 Along the fragmentary rhyme,
 Years back within thine infant ear
 Lodged lightly—thus to re-appear,

Thus, as a vague deceitful Muse
 Its melody may re-infuse
 Into a heart that hath declined
 From the pure guidance of the mind.
 O limbs, whose life is it ye live ?
 Which now no more your service give
 To a considerant human soul !
 Is it the wind which doth control
 This graceful twining of your play ?
 Or do mild spirits, gently gay,
 Thus prompt your motions to obey
 The self-same impulse which persuades
 The woodbine, deep in oaken shades,
 Her sturdy pillar to embrace
 With movements of such matchless grace ;
 Or bids the skylark, of pure sound
 Extracted from the dewy ground
 While morning yet is all divine,
 About the fleeing stars entwine,
 In modulations soft as strong,
 The bright inevitable line
 Of its elastic song ?

Poor Child ! when Fancy's all is said,
 What art thou but a creature dead,—
 Dead to the real life of life,

The spiritual stir—the strife
 Ineffable of soul and sense !
 Yet mayst thou live without offence ;
 And thou, poor Child, in memory
 A monument shalt stand to me
 (With many a gem and many a flower,
 And many a cloudlet of the sky),
 Of God's surpassing love and power,
 Who, speaking only to the eye,
 Can carry with an inward smart
 A voiceless meaning to the heart.

ASPIRATION.

Joy for the promise of our loftier homes !
 Joy for the promise of another birth !
 For oft oppressive unto pain becomes
 The riddle of the earth.

A weary weight it lay upon my youth
 Ere I could tell of what I should complain ;
 My very childhood was not free, in truth,
 From something of that pain.

Hours of a dim despondency were there,
 Like clouds that take its colour from the rose,
 Which, knowing not the darkness of the air,
 But its own sadness knows.

Youth grew in strength—to bear a stronger chain ;
 In knowledge grew—to know itself a slave ;
 And broke its narrower shells again, again,
 To feel a wider grave.

What woe into the startled spirit sank
 When first it knew the inaudible recall,—
 When first in the illimitable blank
 It touched the crystal wall !

Far spreads this mystery of death and sin,
 Year beyond year in gloomy tumult rolls ;
 And day encircling day clasps closer in
 Our solitary souls.

O for the time when in our seraph wings
 We veil our brows before the Eternal Throne—
 The day when drinking knowledge at its springs,
 We know as we are known.

LILIE. A MYTH.

WITHIN this bosom she was born,
I say not if 'twas day or night
I say not if 'twas eve or morn
When Lilie saw the light.

A vision that for seventeen years
Had floated in men's eyes was she ;
A bright machine of smiles and tears,
No more—till she knew me.

Into my arms that vision crept,
And nothing knew she there should find !
And I breathed on her as she slept,
And she became a Mind.

And now she was and she was not,
When, faltering betwixt part and whole,
I closer clasped her, and begot
Upon herself her Soul.

I was a coarse and vulgar man,
 I vile and vulgar things 'had done ;
 And I, as Nature's instincts ran,
 Was wont to let them run.

And yet to such a man as I
 Did Lillie her pure fancy fling ;
 And loved me—as a butterfly
 May love a flower of Spring.

She sought my breast, she nestled there,
 For nought knew she that should forbid :
 God help me ! but she was too fair,—
 I knew not what I did.

I knew not what I did, and now
 Scarce know if I did wrong or right ;
 But in my arms, I wot not how,
 There came a Soul to light.

But as one bends o'er waters clear,
 And sees the cloud-reflecting space
 Give quickly up the idle sphere
 To yield a human face,

So while we talked that blissful eve,
I saw my Lilie's heaven-grey eye ;
I saw her virgin breast conceive
The deep Humanity.

And then, upon her wondering still,
I poured the warm breath of a man ;
And so in Lilie's soul the thrill
Of woman's life began.

There's many a tale shall say and prove,
How some are ruined by their charms ;
But Lilie, as I live and love,
Was born within my arms.

PARTING.



—FORTH into the black night
 Ran the black boat. A shudder and a snort,
 A flash, and forth it ran. Went all my hope with it.

A moment, and a sudden foolish joy
 O'erswept me that the black boat should not go—
 A moment while it hung upon its poise
 And seemed it could not start ; the sleepy waters
 Clogged so its fans (how did I love those waters !)
 Which with a strong will soon—alas !—
 Grinding their clog to smoke, made opposition
 Into assistance. Forth it went, my hope with it.

Forth ran the black boat into the black blank ;
 But still on board there burned a living light :
 My hope burned with it. For a time, too short,
 It kept the dark at bay ; then more and more
 That cheery, warm, recognisable spot
 Narrowed, each breathless moment more and more,
 Till so the vast o'ercrept it, that it now
 Was but a shapeless patch on the black lane—
 Now but a star that night, respecting, hates—

Now but a spark that blackness yawns to swallow.
The spark expired ! Expired my hope with it ?

From the pierhead into the dark I stared,
I strained my starting eyes : was nought to see.
As I upon a promont of creation,
Where it o'rejects the inexistent void,
Had stood to gaze, so gazed I from the pier ;
So fearfully the blind wave of nothingness
Rolled up against my eyeballs, with a pain
That seemed to quench my soul: my blood, I had
said,
Knew no more motion—frozen in its spring.
Nought in the deep ! Nought in the sky ! *No sky !*
No deep ! I only standing on the pier,
My back against that world, that only was,
From which I had just beheld its only good
Pass out into the nought !

For life I yearned,
For substance, sweet assurance, strong reality.
They were behind me, and beneath my foot
Swelled the solidity for which I yearned ;
Yet nor behind me could I bear to look—
To see the mountains, lights, and breathing town,
Nor downward look—to see the well-cut flags,

The well-sheathed limb, that would speak of a world
indeed

Of warm humanity, manners, arts, and things,
Yet from whose gross and now fantastic bulk
All spirit, life, and goodness had passed out
With that black boat into void nothingness.

Fond are the moods of lovers, yet not vain ;
Nor seldom in the bosom of one thought
Lie other thoughts that are of *deeper* truth.
From ledge to ledge, abysm within abysm
(As, say they, in the marvellous lunar sphere,
The huge vulcanian chasms, gulf swallowing gulf),
Descends the inward deep of spiritual truth,
Wherein the soul has power to plunge and sound
Through passion. Not at once she plumbs the depth.
Long stood I on the pier, and night stole on,
And from behind me (as I saw not yet)
Lamp after lamp in bedroom casements died,
And sound dropped after sound: in the silent streets
The watchman hooded now the useless lights ;
And when I turned, *behind* me, as before,
Was vacancy, and darkness, and blind silence.
There were no mountains, lights, nor breathing town,
Even my own limb was dyed in vacancy.
I say not then a thought of *deeper* truth

Came not upon me—from the solid earth,
 That, still unseen, swelled to my warmer sole,
 Grew up, and through my frame spread cordial life,
 That left not my heart empty. Not by sight
 Man lives (my hope grew lusty) but by faith.

IL GELOSO.

My misery chokes my life !
 And thou, the cause of all,
 Dost sit and walk, and, mocking on the strife,
 Kiss hands to every fopling of the ball !

Chit, you are carrying honey in your palm ;
 Beware thy steps ! What ! see it fall to ground,
 Waste, and be lost, which were the balm
 Of such a wound as mine—of all this wound !

What did I mutter while by thee I stood ?
 I muttered, “ Dragging her to shameful shade,
 Shall I let forth the battle of my blood
 On those white plains ? ”——Art not afraid ?

'Twere but to leap a thought even now ! sand holds this
sea ;

By paper is confined this fire : beware !
Myself I honour, while I honour thee ;
In every act of thine is held a double care.

Fiends whisper, “ Warn her not ! Let fate proceed !
And vanity were daunted for all time.”
In some sort 'twere a charitable deed :
Make it a sacrifice, and 'tis sublime !

But no, though thou art silly, shallow, vain,
'Twere pity to despoil a thing so fair.
Will it be done ? Or shall I still refrain ?
O silly creature, suffer me to spare !

NEW-OLD PHILOSOPHY.

“ Un vrai Philosophe est homme, fait gloire de l'être.”

MARMONTEL.

LET Love be Love, my best philosophers !
As Motion is the regent Law of life,
Even so 'tis Passion only which confers
The power of Love. All contest is not strife.
It is not peace, but death, where nothing stirs.

Not all its alps and valleys have destroyed
 Earth's spheric symmetry. From depth to height
 Spin the blind worlds, unerringly employed—
 Stars, comets, systems—from all time, to write
 One pure eternal circle on the void.

So is Love's genuine calm, by Passion's strife
 Kept rich and full, else falling soon away,
 Or (keeping semblance) sad in lack of life,
 As that cold impress fair the adulterous clay
 Took on the bounteous heart of Diomed's Wife.*

Beneath the tents which sacred Love invests,
 Blush not, true man, the rosy wreath to take ;
 Nor, while within thine arms the dear one rests,
 With overstooping kisses to awake
 The little Love asleep between her breasts.

The true philosopher is he whose eye
 Reads truly nature, God's appointed plan—
 He who obeys her rule instinctively,
 Or wittingly, or not, the genuine man.
 Wisdom is to obey her, knowing why !

* In the Museum at Naples is shown the mould of a woman's bosom in indurated ashes—supposed to be that of the wife of Diomed the possessor of the Villa called by his name at the gate of Pompeii.

APOSTROPHE.

—•—

TIME may give way, his weary wings
 May drop in middle flight ;
 The sun may faint, and earth, that springs
 As fondly in his light,
 As to a mother bending o'er
 Her nursling, waked from timely sleep,
 May lie, as it hath lain before ;
 And darkness yet once more
 May be upon the surface of the deep.

What worth the cave, within whose chambers coiling
 Like a gorged dragon lies, his head thrust forth,
 The clammy Dark, when all the miners' toiling
 Is o'er, and all the gold has long been spent in mirth ?
 —As little worth as Thou,
 O Earth, that hummest now
 So proudly with thy myriad souls, when they
 Have had their trial here and all are called away.

Then shall the empty planet roll
 As idly on the immeasurable space

As doth a blind man's eye upon his leaden face
 Or let it be extinguished like a coal,
 Its blackness and its cold, let them return :
 Shall the stars mourn in heaven, that happy throng,
 Their sinful sister long ?

I watched the Pleiads one serenest night
 (The flowers were shut—a solitary bird
 Was in that silence heard),
 Pellucid, soft, and bright,
 They seemed methought to share
 The tender pleasure of the earth and air,
 They clung and clustered happily—methinks they did
 not mourn !

I WOULD.



LITTLE it were (and that by me uncraved),
 Though by the powerful magic of my pen
 All time should own thy peerless beauty saved
 For an eternal idol among men.

Something indeed it were, I justly own,
 My passion to embroider on the hem
 Of thy perfections—so to send it down
 Futurity, appendent upon them.

For though a little thing, yet were it sweet
 To testify that thou whose sovran sight
 Should sum all human-kind kissing thy feet,
 In me at least didst realise thy right.

But what I crave,—what day and night my heart
 Cries for, with yearning not to be repress,
 Is that all time should see, glassed in my art,
 Thy image, as I bear it in my breast.

Beauty is common, and the triumph poor
 That treads upon the sense, not on the will ;
 At best its empire partial and unsure,
 For some men are born blind, and some see ill.

But to be peerless through a peerless soul,
 Sending through flesh its pure transpicuous ray ;
 To wear, in mere completion of the whole,
 The fairest form that ever bloomed in clay.

As this is truly *greatness*, so to live
 Thus beyond death is *glory* truly read ;
 Mere admiration is but fugitive,
 But *Love* is faithful, even to the dead.

Reflective *Love*, that to the thing approved
 Transforms the approver ;—this for thee I seek,
 That the base world, regarding thee beloved,
 May grow as thou art, lovely, pure and meek.

And such the love which thou I know must own,
 Seen only—but conceived of—yet to be
 Thy mere apparitor—but to bear thy crown,
 Alas ! is all too excellent for me.

GOODMAN TOBACCO-FARMER.

WRITTEN IN SICILY IN 1846.

GOODMAN TOBACCO-FARMER spreads out his store to dry ;
 Row and row the green leaves in a seemly order lie ;
 The open shore invites him, row and row he spreads
 them there,
 Binding neatly into bundles, as they answer to the air.
 To-day's are fat and scentless, to-day's are green with
 dew ;
 Yesterday's are shrunk and brown, but the scent is
 creeping through.

The rocky open shore, better drying-field were none—
None freer to the breezes, nor fairer to the sun.

But the road runs close beside—wall or hedge he must
not make,

Idle carmen, idle fisher boys ! 'tis the farmer's purse at
stake.

His purse and honour also—for our farmer doth maintain
To grow the best Tobacco on the rich Palermo plain.

Protection must be had, so with toil the boughs he cut,
With toil the stakes he planted, and wattled him a hut.
Three-sided was the lodge, but open to survey,
The green leaves and the brown that in seemly order lay,
—What carpeting of Astracan to him had seemed so sweet?
What rich floor-picture shuffled o'er by lordly Roman feet?

Then it was I stood and marked him, housed in his leafy
cell ;

Proud security was in his face, for he watched his
treasure well.

If the roguish wind would make a clutch at a dry leaf
in his play,

Out he darted !—weighted with a stone, the russet
rambler lay.

Even in his noontide napping one ear was yet awake,
For the light-foot lizard's scamper, or the rustle of the
snake.

Goodman Tobacco-farmer, you watch them with a will !
 Better watching never yet was seen, and it is fruitless
 still !

Even honest I am robbing you, in every nerve I feel
 The delicate Aleccia which I innocently steal.*
 Neighbour, gently comprehend me—the sticky leaves
 you keep,
 But the *odour*, friend, is flying free, o'er hill and plain
 and deep.

Over landward gardens floating, the truant fragrance flies,
 Still before you lies your treasure, coffered in your
 careful eyes.

On the road the snuffing carman drives indolently past.
 On the shore the sturdy fisherman stands and delays
 his cast.

Good neighbour, sack your treasure, take home what yet
 you may,
 But the leaves are all that you can keep, the scent *will*
 fly away.

Now, friend Tobacco-farmer, shall I tell thee what I see,
 That makes an image in my mind not much unlike to
 thee ?

* The Aleccia (I do not know if rightly so spelt) is a finer kind of tobacco.

Look yonder o'er the silver Bay,—those stately ships
that stand

Anchored on the glowing deep—ishes of artificial land ;
They are the watcher's lodge, good friend !—this land
the precious store,

And the KING is he that watches, as you do, evermore.

This folk may neither speak nor write but as he gives
them rule,

They must ask his leave to come or go—like children in
a school.

The corn shall not grow up an inch, but it fees him for
his grace ;

The fig-trees rain him pennies, the water pays its pace ;
Doth the wild bird bear his licence under his speckled
wing ?

If the wild bird comes to Sicily, it shall surely pay the
King.

Yes, he watches well, as you do, a shrewd and careful
man ;

What watchfulness can keep, that will he keep, and can.
From his lodges he has built him,—ships and citadels of
might,—

Lidless iron eyes are watching, watching, watching, day
and night ;

Watching are all his scouts and spies, doganiers, police,—
 Sixty thousand men are watching, with a new-cleaned
 gun a-piece.

Therefore all hath he that watching gives :—from his
 Palace set on high

He gazes ;—all is safe, his own, betwixt the earth and sky.
 His pennies come in punctually ;—soft flatteries plump
 his throne ;

Says the Ancient (lying meekly), “ What is mine, Sire,
 is your own ! ”

Says the lusty-lying Younger, “ Sire, I kiss my bride
 to-night,

That your Majesty may never lack defenders of your
 right ! ”

But the Ancient, going home, flings his stars upon the
 ground,

Groaning, “ Will the wheel of Freedom never more turn
 round ?

Hither, steward !—drain the vineyard, and never spare
 the land,

Gold, gold is of no country, get gold you understand ! ”

Through the banker's silent fingers see the golden
 streamlet glance,

To fat the sluggard English clays, or arid sands of France.

And that night the Young-man, lying silent by his
 bride,
 Blasphemes the sacred fire of youth, that would not be
 denied :
 Cursing Nature, hating Love, creeps to Beauty's breast
 the brave,
 Whispering wildly, " Yet be fruitless,—son me never
 with a slave."

Weeps long that swelling mother,—hides her glory as
 she can,
 Nor dare murmur " Noble husband, God hath owned thee
 for a Man ! "

And Thought and Genius ? What ! think you that
 creatures stay
 In a prison's noisome narrows, who have wings to get
 away ?
 On far Parisian garret-floors the alien tomes are spread,
 When the historian's magic eye would question with the
 dead ;
 Feebly, by foreign breezes swept, the old Sicilian Tree
 Murmurs its near-forgotten trick of honeyed melody.*

* The free-minded Sicilian writers, whether in prose or verse, were
 obliged to have recourse to the French press, and some at least, like
 Amari, to live in exile.

Thus, me-seemeth, gracious King, that Sovran Lord
thou art

Of every thing about the land *except* its soul and heart.
To the outward flies, detesting thee, all energy of good,
Even vice, in its hot chamber, would forget thee if it
could.

O King, count well thy pennies—pouch, Soul-farmer,
what you may,

But the leaves methinks are all you keep, the odour
flies away.

VERSES WRITTEN IN THE BOBOLI GARDENS AT FLORENCE.



BRIGHT pomp of mingled vale and mound !

Fair walks and alleys green !

—Yet let me go where humbler ground

Lets Nature's will be seen.

We imitate—'tis wisely done,

Yet ofttimes do we find,

With all her features fairly won,

We have not caught her mind.

For she hath meanings, though unseen ;
 In wisdom and in love,
 She spreads her placid sheets of green,
 Or knits the boughs above.

In wood and wold, in field and lane, .
 She walks, a blameless Muse ;
 Still busy something to restrain,
 And something to infuse.

FLORENCE,
Jan. 26, 1845.

AN ANNIVERSARY.



Two years ago, this day, he died ;
 In silence to the grave he stole ;
 To many friends their joy and pride,—
 To me the brother of my soul.

Then died their hopes and were not seen,
 But still our love, it seems to me,
 Survives, though something hangs between,—
 A haze—a dim perplexity !

Perplexity that gathers still
 Veil over veil, fold upon fold !
 Like mists of rain about a lonely hill
 Round me that cloud contracts or is unrolled.

Come often Intimations, as it were,
 He still were somewhere dwelling on the earth ;
 Some look that of his beauty hath a share,
 Some laugh that hath a sound of his delicious mirth !

II.

If I no more behold thy face
 I know thou art not lost ;—I know
 Christ keeps thee in a safer place,
 And I at heart would have it so.

I murmur not. O soul above,
 'Tis not my voice thou hearest groan ;
 'Tis sin that counterfeits my love,
 I but for weakness moan.

But no, thou hast a finer ear,
 And thou, I trust—'tis more than *I* dare say,—
 Discern'st the joyful spirit singing clear
 Even in this miserable house of clay !

III.

Year after misty year comes forth,
And old things flee and new arrive ;
And still he lingers on the earth,—
My friend is still alive.

Or if sometimes he be not here,
Like flowerets of the Spring,
Soon doth his beauty reappear,
A renovated thing.

Kin to all love and nobleness,
All glory is his heir ;
No deed to praise, no sight to bless
Comes out, but he is there.

Is he alive in truth, or dead and dull
And lost, for ever lost to mortal eye ?
O friend, so noble and so beautiful
While earth is fair, to me thou canst not die !

Some need, of sensual nature born,
 Subjects the blithest hour of morn ;
 Eve slaves in beauty to some task
 Of Reason, half-ashamed to ask ;
 Some refuse moments of dull light,
 Love's pittance out of all his right
 On universal Day and Night.

And yet we love !—

Plongeon, Geneva.

TO ———



A HERO's bride, by Nature made !
 —Yet rather who hath stood,
 And with a hero's soul obeyed
 A vision pure of blood.

Ah me ! what bliss—if it could be—
 Acknowledged by thy love,
 To breast the world below with thee,
 To scale the world above !

Ah me ! from lower cares of earth
 By such a mate redeemed,
 What I have hoped, to body forth,
 To do what I have dreamed !

O for a soul by thee imbued
 With energies severe,
 To hold the faith in fortitude,
 Until the darkness clear.

What were a life, thou looking on !
 The dagger of thy tear
 The goad,—a smile of thine the crown
 Of the immense career !

O rather for the gloomy days
 Of ordinary life,
 Enlightened by thy love, thy praise,
 A sympathising wife :

By the pure privilege of love
 The inner strife to see,
 When angels bring from realms above
 Some tear-crowned victory ;

Or,—milder bliss—in some green nook
 While summer suns decline,
 To read some pure and peaceful book,
 Her eyelight mixed with mine !

THE FATHER AND THE CHILD.

ALL on the open shore,—the Vale, the peerless Bay,
 Ten miles of beauty, broad and soft, in his eye reflected
 lay ;
 But the Father there saw nothing, but only the tender
 guest
 That, yet nor boy nor girl, played bo-peep within his
 vest.

A noble frame and strong, limbs of health's firmest
 mould,
 The Father, propped against the bank, gave the proud
 earth to hold ;
 The arm that lay beneath his head, the hand that looped
 the Ass,
 Had widened him a road, methinks, where he had willed
 to pass.

But the Child, ah, fragile creature! the riband's scarlet
gleam

Fell into its pale cheek as a shadow in a stream.

Seraph, half-unfleshed already! with the glimmer of the
day

Will it not fall to shade, to air, thin out, and pass away?

And this the seed of such a Sire? Could Love no more
than this,

When all the soul stretched all the flesh to span the
fruitful bliss?

What poison held thy manly strength? What spell
besate the hour?

Behold, the oak a lily breeds, the tree begets a flower!

Ah, mutual bondage of true love! Ah, spiritual sway
That guides the blinder sense on its Heaven-appointed
way!

What do not thy pale cheeks, O child, thy puny limbs
impart

Of the feeble girl who overcame thy father's lusty heart?

Beautiful to see and think how the power of heart and
mind

Can lead the lion passions and the savage pulse of kind!

How the weak subdues the strong, yea, the foolish bends
the wise

By the might of a pure nature, or a pair of pretty eyes ?

All his Beata left him, may the breeze make fresh and
gay,

Thine airy cheek ! I tell thee, thou must not pass away !
Single trophy of his single love, he clasps thee to his
soul ;

'Tis through Thee, Child, Heaven and Earth to him are
made into a whole.

Romagnuolo, 1845.

TO A FRIEND.



FRIEND, give to me that calmer heart,
For I have learned by you
How 'tis the higher, lovelier part,
To suffer than to do.

Teach me, like thee, serene and still,
To let my life go play,
My humble task to mark its will,
And to approve the way.

For me, I make, I mend, I mar,
 I order, and must rule ;
 Those blessings scarcely blessings are,
 I have not put to school.

• But life at every moment crost
 Is overmuch employed ;
 Nor while I mourn o'er what is lost,
 Is what is saved enjoyed.

Each morn for thee in joy that breaks
 Thy wisdom, friend, approves ;
 And health hath marked thee on the cheeks
 For one whom Nature loves.

SO HELP ME, LOVE.



For the credit of great Love I must be brave !
 For else will they take senseless leave to scoff
 Who venture nought for Love, and nothing have,
 And boldly boast they are the better off.

But if I show, that having caught a wound
 I am content therewith, and rather choose
 Wounded to own Love's service than be sound,
 Free of his arm, or even emeritus ;

Then men will grant that something there must be
 In that immortal bondage more than shows,
 And some pure convert, thinking upon me,
 May turn to Love, believing ere he knows.

So help me, Love, for thine own credit's care,
 And for the due recruiting of thy reign,
 Help me, I say not, tranquilly to bear,
 That were too much,—but patiently to feign !

THE DAISY IN THE SOUTH.

THIS, this a daisy ! gayest flower
 I left at home, yet meekest !
 This flaunting flatterer of the hour,
 Seen e'er thou seest or seekest ;
 A daisy this !—then call pretence
 Reserve, call meekness impudence !

Thou foolish clime, that could'st betray
 By pampering this beauty
 The loveliest image which the day
 Beheld of cheerful Duty ;

'Tis more than Fancy weeps the cost
Of such a type to Nature lost.

There are conversions of the eye ;
Tumultuary accesses,
Obtained ere passion can deny
Into the soul's recesses,
May make a flower of this pure sense,
A teacher above recompense.

And what for childhood's opening heart,
Perceptions ever growing,
What might not such a fount impart,
Perpetually flowing,
Besprinkling field and rock and lane
With wisdom of this English strain ?

O gay Italian land, to me
In all thy wondrous glory
Is something still I fain would see,
More staid, less transitory,
A charm my heart has often found
Couched in the Daisy's simple round.

TO AGANIPPE.

YET once again, thou little silent Spring,
Which, welling from beneath the green hillside,
Makest one dimple on the placid face
Of contemplative Avon, one alone
For ever floating off, ever caught back,
Or, as it dies, reborn,—yet once again
I stand beside thee with a heart at home,
And can behold thee with the quiet love
We give to things domestic, which we see
At morn with tranquil pleasure, and at night
Can close our eyes on calmly, doubting not
To see the same again with morn renewed.
Yet once again beside thee, little Spring,
The murmuring Muse draws near, and with a voice
That might, here heard among these shady trees,
Be taken for *thy* voice, O silent Spring,
Bids me rejoice aloud !

More foreign lands,
O quiet Spring, than in a summer's length
Thou bringest bubbles from thy secret cell
To disappear in daylight, have my eyes

Conceived and let as willingly escape,
 Since I stood last beside thee, feeding thus
 Calm verse from a calm heart. Delicious nest
 Of shadow, with sweet inlet for the sun
 Through loopholes of the orange or the vine
 Have I enjoyed, while veins of crystal water
 Broke at my side from mountains lost in air ;
 Sweet chapels of the pinewoods, odorous
 With natural incense, where a million stems
 On every side with all their lights and shades
 Made glimmering walls, that, serving to confine
 The worshipping fancy, sank before the eye
 Each in an endless distance, an abyss
 Of columns, exquisitely soaring up
 From mossy floors, smooth as a tranquil lake,
 Into the figured darkness overhead ;
 Nor (nearer thine own kind, sweet native cell !)
 Among soft hills by rivers broad and soft,
 Have nooks and quiet foldings of the banks
 Green as thyself, been wanting, where to sit
 Watching an evening sun, or leisurely
 Tracking the leisure of the noonday clouds.

O little native cell, clear is thy spring
 And green thy Birch-tree with its myriad threads
 One image seen, for ever soaring up,

Yet evermore descending ; and my eye
Acknowledges its joy—but something more
Is thine than in the visual organ rests
Or ever through the avenue of sight
Made entrance to the heart.—What is it ?—What ?
Who answers ? In the thick and bowery copse
Sinks, sinks my voice—'tis lost !—the parted hum
Of the busy flies and insects, closes again,
And the multitudinous silence of the green world
Resumes its reign. There is no answer. Yet,
O little native cell, though none express
Nor even the tear-dimmed inner eye discern
The nature of thy charm, yet I assert
That thou art fairer than the fairest niche
The earth hath shown me since I saw thee last ;
And he shall mock thy claim, and only he,
Who never from a foreign land with joy
Came home, and never in his home possessed
A single leafy cell with a bright Spring
Enlivening it, which he had made his own,
Lived in—and loved in !

EVENING STANZAS.

WHERE walks by day the peaceful Eve ?
 In Heaven's own gardens, O believe,
 She gathers the delight
 Which, hoarded up from hour to hour
 In her sweet breast, the faithful Power
 Brings down to earth at night.

Come, gentle Eve ! She will not hear :
 The distant fields are bold and clear,
 Though from the sultry west
 The clouds their progress have begun,
 And with poised orb the crimson sun
 Is waiting for his rest.

She heard—she comes !—anear, afar !
 Already her first twinkling star
 Is caught among the trees ;
 And odours which the day confined
 Are loading with a grateful mind
 Her liberating breeze.

May, violet, primrose, all and each
 She welcomes with a kindly speech,
 Which, passing on the air,
 Cheers every root ; nor ill content
 Leans the low daisy on the bent,
 For she hath had her share.

Meek subject, Evening, of thy reign,
 The river vails his glittering train,
 And round the misty field
 Flows silently, his easier breast,
 (With warring lights no more distress,)
 Half seen and half concealed.

With what a spirit-light the trees
 Attire themselves at thy first breeze !
 —A light as it were thrown
 From that deep joy that works like grief ;
 Which now in every delicate leaf
 Is settling into stone.

Nor lifeless things alone obey
 Thy rule : beneath the alders gray
 The dazzling gnats appear,
 Thy minstrelsy !—a humble quire,
 Yet joyful as the festive lyre
 If but the heart can hear.

High delegate of Heaven's own rest !
 If man's impure and anxious breast
 Thy loveliness despise,
 How thankful is the innocent earth !
 How gladly pour their welcome forth
 The unpolluted skies !

Earth's sweetest scent, Air's fairest light
 Are thine by immemorial right ;
 Thine is the grateful boon
 Of waters locked in calmest shine ;
 These jetty trees are only thine,
 And thine this crescent moon !

What wouldst thou more ? Benignant Power,
 Art thou disquiet in thy bower
 So brightly decked, so fair ?
 Alas ! the voices which the best
 Should thank thee for thy peace and rest,
 How seldom they are there !

Not for thyself, for us thy brow
 So oft with an uneasy glow
 Is flushed, thy peaceful eyes
 Are vexed with tresses all undecked
 And gloom, reproach of the neglect
 It almost justifies.

Yet walkest thou not in vain, sweet Eve,
 At least to-night, we may believe,
 From this resplendent face,
 Though oft denial, breeding doubt,
 Leave not thy cheeriest look without
 Its melancholy grace.

TO THE CUCKOO IN SPRING.

O SOLITARY of the Spring,
 Why still, this heavenly morn,
 Must thou of *future* glories sing,
 And blessings *to be* born ?

O cease, thou tedious Prophet, cease !
 Here let the heart delay,
 And taste a moment's perfect peace
 Before it pass away !

—Still louder and with louder glee
 The Cuckoo preached he bolder,
 Of something better yet to be
 When Time should be yet older.

STANZAS

SUGGESTED IN THE BOBOLI GARDENS AT FLORENCE.

A portion of these gardens is laid out in the English style.



I WALKED down many an avenue,
 Through many a tutored shade,
 And with my thoughts, as idlers do,
 In idleness I played :
 Delicious maze of grove and hill,
 And fountains far away !
 But I was free, and knew my will,
 And made my heart obey.

By terraces, by statues fair
 My steps awhile were led,
 Or glimpses of the outer air
 Still beckoning on ahead :
 At last, grown weary of success
 And pleasure always found,
 I took a path that promised less,
 And seemed neglected ground.

A green-grown path, through gloomy screens
 Of damp holm-oak it pressed,
 Yet confident, as though its means
 Were more than it confessed :
 But soon it ran less free and fleet,
 Then, like a thing afraid,
 Stopped suddenly beneath my feet,
 Within a silent glade.

No statues here, no marble cup
 Still dripping with the stream !
 No cypresses still spiring up
 Terrific as a dream !
 No royalty, no pride of heart,
 No tall Palladian dome ;
 —But 'twas a garden of the heart,
 'Twas England,—it was home !

Dear Charnwood, thou hast glades like this
 Hid in thy rocky breast !
 How often, tranced in summer bliss,
 Such scenes have I possessed !
 How often sighed for them I love
 To see and take their part,
 Then checked the sigh that would disprove
 Their presence—in my heart.

Banks green and smooth, with stems beset,
 And such a shade o'erhead
 As lapped a richer violet
 Upon a mossier bed ;
 Retired, yet free to eve and morn,
 Such haunts the ranging deer
 Would mark, and lead her trotting fawn
 To couch in sunshine here.

How wildly leaned those antic trees !
 Like Bacchanals they flung
 Their arms,—upon their ecstacies
 As upon wings they hung !
 Yet here no riotous thoughts intrude ;
 Even in these postures free
 Is seen the staid and stately mood
 Of Nature's liberty.

What pageantry is here to pass ?
 Those sheets of golden green,
 Spread they for none across the grass,
 Or for a Fairy Queen ?
 March on, proud Creatures, in your state,
 While ivy sparkles bright,
 And mossy stems illuminate
 With a sedater light.

Vain fancies these ! and I surmise
 They came not *then* between
 My startled heart or my glad eyes
 And that delightful scene.
 Or if they came I could not know,
 A captive and a prey
 Was I to times so long ago,
 And things so far away.

My Father's garden it was spread
 Before me in my mind ;
 Its ancient apple-trees they shed
 Their flowers upon the wind :
 Its walks, that ran like forest brooks
 Through sunshine and through shade,
 Its plots for play, its dappled nooks
 For musing converse made.

Each bank, each bush in all the place
 Took a familiar show,
 There was no step of that fair space
 I did not seem to know :
 Sight grew bewildered, reason swerved
 Beneath the magic beam,
 Till all the real only served
 To authenticate the dream.

The plays a city fancy played
 Took aptly to the scene,
 Here gleamed the Hermitage, embayed
 In its appropriate green ;
 There towered (and peeped into a street)
 The ruined arch alone,
 Yon flowery square of fifty feet,
 A desert all its own.

And ah, what figures rose to view
 Among those pleasant glades !
 What aspects, joining old with new
 In ever-mingling shades !
 So few, and yet so many grown,
 While memory's wizard ray
 Transmutes the yellow locks to brown,
 And brown, alas ! to grey.

What Sabbath mornings rose once more,
 Dear Mother, while with pride
 A stumbling servitor I bore
 The basket at thy side !
 And all the flowers that fell to ground
 A perquisite of mine,
 —Own Mother, where were ever found
 Such careless hands as thine !

Then on the garden seat in haste
 The fragrant spoil we ranged,
 And oft their place beneath thy taste
 The patient buds exchanged :
 Nor few the nosegays to be wrought
 In honour of the day,
 For in that household none was thought
 Too humble to be gay.

And what sweet eves come slanting bright
 Across the emerald floor !
 What voices rise, like founts of light !
 —Now dark for evermore !
 What laughter on the still air rings !
 Alas that laughers die
 (Such foresight clogs even lightest things)
 In action of a sigh.

The thunders of the battledore
 Assault the day's decline !
 The lamp within shines more and more,
 The chimes are jangling nine !
 Confusion on thee, drudging clock !
 We only own to-day
 Time vaulting with the shuttlecock
 That leads our joyful play.

Yet one more round ! who struck so high ?
 That soaring flight assures
 A vigorous arm, a faultless eye,
 —Dear Father, whose but yours ?
 And whose but yours the wit that flies
 In richest sparkles round,
 Wit that is wisdom in disguise,
 Sense that disports in sound.

But stay ! the visions throng too fast !
 O calm and sylvan scene,
 Renounce that dangerous spell, the past,
 Let what has been have been !
 Such awful insight unto me
 Thine aspect doth reveal,
 As almost 'tis too much to see,
 Ah, how much more to feel !

TO A CUCKOO IN AUTUMN.



O SADLY sung—or sadly heard !
 How came into thy throat,
 O Cuckoo blithe, thou vernal bird,
 That melancholy note ?

The fields are fading with the year,
 An autumn sadness fills
 The pallid pastures far and near,
 And weighs upon the hills.

With faded leaves upon the breeze,
 That wanton hiccup goes,
 And where amid dismantling trees
 The swollen river flows.

O Cuckoo, timeless in thy glee !
 Thou hast undone thy power
 For me, by singing joyfully
 In this ungenial hour.

Fond creature, if thou couldst but know
 The charm thou dost destroy !
 May nothing in the world below
 Belong alone to joy ?

Sad Voice, so blithe when Heaven and Earth
 Are meeting in the Spring,
 Did we not know before that mirth
 May be a mournful thing ?

THE RIDDLE.

WAS ever breast of mortal birth
With such sweet riddle laden ?
Was she a Spirit of the earth
Or a Celestial Maiden ?

I know not now, I knew not then,
But oft with her conversing,
Now was I one that talked with men,
Now one with Heaven commercing.

I know not : this alone is sure,
That, ever seeing clearer,
I found the earthly grew more pure,
And the divine came nearer.

SHE BEWITCHED ME.



SHE bewitched me
With such a sweet and genial charm,
I knew not when I wounded was,
And when I found it hugged the harm.

Down hill ; ah yes—down hill, down hill I glide,
But such a hill !
One tapestried fall of meadow pride,
Of ladysmock and daffodil.

How soon, how soon adown a rocky stair,
And slips no longer smooth as they are sweet,
Shall I, with backward-streaming hair,
Outfly my bleeding feet ?

THE QUESTION.

O MINNIE, which are thy true charms ?
 Now heavenly, now human,
 Say, shall I fold thee in my arms
 An Angel or a Woman ?

A Spirit first before my sight,
 Before my fancy dancing,
 Thou shonest, like a water-light
 Retreating and advancing.

More close I looked ; and to a Child
 The splendour seemed to steady ;
 A thing that breathed, a thing that smiled,
 Bespoke my heart already.

Ah, would it speak ?—And if it spake
 Some speech past our conventions,—
 The tongue in which the lightnings break
 Of Angel apprehensions ?

I listened, and I heard its tongue,
 The tongue of mortal fancy,
 Of Earth's affections ever young,
 And human innocency.

I heard ; my heart began to melt,
 And farther inquest urging
 My eyes—that dared not see it—felt
 The bosom of the Virgin.

Ah, was it then a human breast ?
 Within it did the treasures
 Of womanhood lie unconfest,
 The sorrows and the pleasures ?

And all the Woman kind and warm
 My heart was busy tracing,
 When gleams of glory crossed the form,
 With lovelier face defacing.

I saw—what was it that I saw ?—
 Some Excellence supernal
 That, scorning the material law,
 Shone by the sempiternal ?

I know not, but since then I see
 In mutual inclusion
 Two diverse Natures *both* in thee, -
 A variance, a confusion !

Now earthly all—of that sweet earth
 That owns of Heaven reversion,
 Thou sittest by a human hearth ;
 Then comes the re-assertion,

And some refulgence of the sky
 And viewless realms above it
 Envelops thee—and I stand by
 And fear it while I love it.

O Minnie, which are thy *true* charms,
 The heavenly or the human ?
 O shall I fold thee in my arms,
 An Angel or a Woman ?

II.

L O N D O N.

O CITY, ever wrapt in thine own mist!
Exempt almost from change of night and day,
Little thou knowest of the dawn-lights gay
Or the pale tower by sunset's glory kissed.
Thee the wild Thunder, bully as he list,
Can scarce make hearken : the defenceless Snow
Is soiled beneath thy footsteps ere thou know
How fair a thing thine arrogance oppressed.
So reign'st Thou—in thy calm obscurity
Not wanting grandeur, though it be no more
Than that of a vain world, to whom unknown
Heaven's mercies gently call, Heaven's warnings roar,
While in a dim complacence of its own
Enwrapt, it lets the life of life pass by.

III.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

(1830).



STRIVE not to stay, for we are made for motion !
 Mistake not, O mistake not !—let it go,
 Bid it Godspeed, the everlasting flow
 Of Man's free Mind, in endless evolution.
 No reconfusing of an old confusion
 Is this ye look on ; MAN IS BORN TO GROW.
 Nature but twins herself to the fresh glow
 Of each new Sun : the ever-rolling ocean
 Hangs still, deep-axled on its own serene :
 But not like this is MAN ; his Progress free
 From new to new for ever ;—what has been
 May *never* be again ;—his Race a Tree,
 Which, rooted, growing in the Earth we see,
 Destines its godlike head for heights unseen.

IV.

TO

THE REVERED MEMORY OF THOMAS ARNOLD, D. D.

YES, noble Arnold, thou didst well to die !
Needed but this, that the dark earth should hide
The seed, to have the harvest far and wide.
Long (with a voice that echoed in the sky)
Didst thou pour forth thy fervent prophecy :
Vain Seer !—for thou amongst us didst abide ;—
This world was then thy country ;—at our side
Thou spak'st scarce heard. But now thou art on high
Among the Immortal and Invisible Quire,
And straight like thunder (silent till the fire
Which caused it dies), thy soul's majestic voice
Is rolling o'er the wonder-smitten land ;
And Truth, that sate in drought, dares to rejoice,
Marking that all admire, some understand.

V.

TO SPEAK, TO MAKE, TO DO, TO BE.

SOMETHING it is, if not the greatest thing,
 To sit, the prophet of Oracular Truth,
 Beside the world, not in it ! great, in sooth,
 Is even his function who can only sing.
 How deep is his whose potent song can bring
 More soul into this labouring frame uncouth,
 This world, still struggling with its clumsy youth,
 Help this cramp chrysalid to stretch its wing !
 Yea, great the Poet's task ! 'tis great to *make*,
 To make Hope, Love, all Nobleness, all Bliss,
 All lovely things and pure. Almost I see
 How man for it should be content to miss
 His greater task—to *do*, yea for its sake
 Abdicate even his greatest right—to *be* !

VI.

THE CHURCH OF ST. MARIA IN VIA LATA, ROME.

This church professes to be founded on the spot once occupied by St. Paul's "hired lodging." A pillar and chain are exhibited as the instruments of his confinement, as well as a spring of water, stated by tradition to have been miraculously called forth by the Apostle for the baptism of his converts.

OH hadst thou in prophetic trance foreseen
 The times to come, been privileged to behold
 Thine own "hired lodging," tawdry and unclean
 As it now stands with Easter-dusted gold ;
 False miracles, (thick-scummed with real mould)
 Supplanting thy pure Voice,—sad hadst thou been,
 O Holy Paul, and tempted to withhold
 Thy teaching from intelligence so mean.
 But thank the darkness of thy moral cloud,
 O Rome, thy lies, thy treachery, thy fear,
 Light seems a sin of *taste*, scarce disallowed
 By us conforming to the atmosphere ;
 Light even a *superstition*, whose control
 Though poison to the mind, may spare the soul.

VII.

The Cactus (*Ficus Opuntia*) will be recollected by the Italian traveller as a frequent accompaniment of fortified places, especially along the coasts, where the temperature and soil are both favourable to this uncouth plant.

NOT stinted of a rude magnificence,
 His massy fins the Cactus huge expands
 Beneath the Fortress :—doth he spread his hands,
 In supplication crouching, or defence ?
 Huddled in fear, or in a grim pretence ?
 Scarred, thorny, with a tigrine stoop he stands,
 Briarean dwarf !—and every way commands
 A thousand armless palms against offence.
 Fit warder he—he, in his ugly might,
 For Custom-guards that never ought to be !—
 But for the beauteous bastions of the Right,
 Of Independence, and Home-Liberty,
 Some other porter seek, or let the light
 Unbroken gild them, planted on the sea !

VIII.

THE NAMING OF THE STARS.



O BLOW, fresh winds, and change this murky air !
Let Heaven, with all its starry clusters hung,
Mew that old glory, and again be young !
Away, away from seats so pure and fair,
Ye Heathen Hosts, too long usurpers there !
The time disowns you, and the sacred fire
Of Christian fancy doth those fields require,
Our heart expands, we have no room to spare.
O long-time Hesper, leader of the Sky,
March thou for Michael, Prince of all the Sphere !
Be thou, dire Mars, Ithuriel's righteous Eye ;
Thou, trembling Venus, Gabriel's holy Tear ;
And let far-darting Jove report on high
Of Uriel balancing his diamond spear !

IX.

TO THE STATUE ENTITLED "L'ESPERANCE."

(IN THE LOUVRE.)

STATUE ! thy sculptor's holiest thought in stone !
 Thee ere the purity of morning broke,
 Day after day he wrought with noiseless stroke,
 Pure as a Flower by silent Nature sown !
 And (I may guess unblamed) that starry crown
 Upon thy heavenly brow he fixed sublime
 In rapture caught—ere Fancy's self had time
 The happy thought to own or to disown.
 Here rule—yet in thy right, nor let the Earth
 Claim loveliness she never yet hath given ;
 Not Hope art thou, still as the desert Palm
 Entranced at noon ; Hope *trembles*—for her birth
 Is of the mutable. *Thou* art a child of Heaven,
 Not Hope, but Faith angelically calm.

X.

TO ———.



LIKE an unused Spectator, who in fear
 Stands midst some enginery, where wheel and chain
 Flame ceaselessly and axles vast complain,
 Terror to the eye and to the shrinking ear,
 So in some thoughtful hours may we stand here,
 While Time takes voice, and shrieking as in pain
 Fly hour and day, and many a shock and strain
 Torments the awful spindle of the Year.
 O Friend, with terror—with consuming dread
 I listen : but thy blessed voice I drink
 Joyful in holy hope, and calm is spread
 Upon my soul, and beyond Time I dare
 To look, and of myself and thee to think,
 Twin Angels sailing through celestial air !

XI.

HE builds on Nature who to genuine Art
Entrusts his bold foundation : not alone
Is the *soil* Earth, but whatsoe'er is grown
Out of the genial vigour of Earth's heart :
The loftiest Alp which scruples not to dart
Into another world its flying cone
Springs from the humble Earth and is her own ;
When the pine breaks the sod, a mother's smart,
Nought more, she feels—'tis part of her, although
The currents of a hundred feet above
Toss its wild leaves that never can be still ;
Yet doth she feed it with a mother's love,
And there the heaven-instructed birds bestow
Their pensile tenements and fear no ill.

XII.

TO ———.



As soldiers from the ramparts of a town
 O'erlooking fields where they have lately striven,
 Tell from what points to what the foe was driven,
 And where at length decisively o'erthrown ;
 So pacing the clear battlements of Heaven,
 Hope tells how *we* may one day looking down
 Point out where such and such a grace was given,
 And where at length the beatific crown.
 O Friend, what jubilant outcry will go forth
 Among the stars when we this place espy
 Where (God's best gift !) we first received each other :
 O fellow Soul ! O brother more than brother !
 May some be listening then upon the earth
 To catch the admonition of that cry !

XIII.

SPEAK it no more—no more with words profane
What only for the language of the eye
Is fit—what only can be told thereby !
The heart has tones which words cannot contain,
And feelings which to speak is to restrain.
Like scent with scent commixed invisibly,
Or rays of neighbour planets in the sky
Inter-confused ; or, as in some deep strain
Of music, heavenly passion is combined
With thought, and tone with tone in harmony,
Thus be the meeting of our hearts, dear love !
The pure communion of mind with mind,
Above poor symbols of this earth,—above
All that can baulk or cramp,—can change or die.

XIV.

SEARCHING the skiey depths all night in vain,
The starry seer hath known this mystery—
That the shy orb, which over half the sky
Had baulked his chase and mocked his utmost pain,
Oft (haply while the daylight poured amain
Into the empty concave of the Night)
Has slipped into his glass, as clear to sight
As the one Tree that stars a grassy plain.
So is it known that some secretive Truth
Which Thought and Patience strove in vain to find,
Just when Despair and Doubt were swallowing all,
Hath dropped into the heart without a call,
Conspicuous as a Fire, and sweet as Youth,
An everlasting stronghold to the mind.

XV.

MONTE CUCCIO.



LAST eve a heavenly glory round thy head
Hung, peerless Mount, and radiating light
Of pure clear tint proclaimed thee, as of right,
King of the famous vale beneath thee spread.
None deemed the lustre from thyself was shed,
All guessed the moon ensconced behind thy cone,
Yet love-deceived the light we let thee own,
And in that crown our cherished fancy read.
Now scarce acknowledged by tempestuous airs,
Darkly thy naked summit spears the dome,
Yet still unchallenged Sovereign dost thou sway
All eyes, all hearts ! True dignity is theirs
Whose foreheads fit the glory if it come,
Nor seem to need it, should it pass away.

CARINI (SICILY), *Aug.* 10, 1845.

DEVOTIONAL POEMS.

I.

HYMN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

I.

PRAISE be Thine, Most Holy Spirit !
 Honour to Thy Holy Name !
 May we love it, may we fear it,
 Set in everlasting fame !
 Honour, honour, praise and glory,
 Comforter, Inspirer, Friend,
 Till these troubles transitory
 End in glory without end !

II.

By Thy Hand in secret working,
 Like a midnight of soft rain,
 Seeds that lay in silence lurking,
 Spring up green and grow amain :

Roots which in their dusty bosoms
 Hid an age of golden days,
 Stirring, with a cloud of blossoms
 Clothe their bareness for Thy praise.

III.

We should sleep but Thou awakest ;
 Sometimes like a morning sun,
 On the dazzled soul Thou breakest,
 Heaven at once on earth begun !
 Sometimes like a star appearing,
 Seen and lost as earth-winds blow,
 Wishing, hoping, thinking, fearing,
 Thou hast saved us ere we know.

IV.

Thou dost set the mute world speaking
 To the sinner in his sin ;
 Thou to spirits humbly seeking,
 Answerest by a voice within ;
 Happier souls, like fruit-trees leading
 Ordered branches o'er the wall,
 Find in Thee the solace needing,
 Shower or sunshine, Thou art all !

v.

When the proud one builds a wonder
 Overshadowing the earth,
 Oft his turrets, split asunder,
 Cast the homeless wanderer forth :
 Underneath his towers derided,
 Conscience lurked, as strong as hell,
 But Thine Eye the times divided,
 And the spark in season fell !

vi.

As an island in a river,
 Vexed with ceaseless rave and roar,
 Keeps an inner silence ever
 On its consecrated shore,
 Flowered with flowers and green with grasses ;
 So the poor through Thee abide,
 Every outer care that passes
 Deepening more the peace inside.

vii.

Led by Thee, the loving Pastor,
 Anxious night and weary day,
 In the footsteps of his Master,
 Seeks the sheep that run astray ;

Glad to warn and glad to cherish,
 With a faithful tender tongue
 Cheers the weak ones near to perish,
 Gently leads the ewes with young.

VIII.

When our heart is faint, Thou warmest,
 Justifiest our delight,
 Thou our ignorance informest,
 And our wisdom shapest right ;
 Thou in peace dost keep, defendest
 In the hour of doubt and strife ;
 Thou beginnest and Thou endest
 All that Christians count of life !

IX.

Gracious Spirit, Spirit Holy,
 Take our spirits unto Thee ;
 Fain we would be happy, lowly,
 Make us as we fain would be !
 'Tis not our own will approves us,
 If we praise or if we sue,
 'Tis Thine own kind Spirit moves us,
 For 'tis Thine to will and do.

II.

O TIME, dull Time, go faster,
I have not found my rest,
I am not with my Master,
Unsanctified, unblest !
I roam in sin and error,
In grief and pain I roam,
I mourn, I am in terror,
My heart is not at home.

O patience, restless spirit !
Resist not, nor repine ;
My peace thou shalt inherit,
The promises are thine !
If thou with sin and weakness
No more wouldst walk below,
Be patient, and learn meekness,
And thou shalt be let go.

III.

YET let me keep the old observances !
—Though, stripped of their sweet meanings, they to me
Be melancholy now as leafless trees :
Yet will I keep them, fruitless though they be ;
And in that arbour of cold Memory
Take oft my pleasure when the wind is low,
And winter strong, and the tired world runs slow,
And with my soul the outer things agree.
I draw—I know it well—from a cold breast
These heartless words ; and yet I can perceive
That I may find in time some safer rest :
Although my earth no more with Noon be bright,
May not this dulness be the fading Eve,
When shall be born the clear dark holy Night ?

IV.

THE evil birds which I have fed so long
In the foul mansion of my sinful soul,
Now with their pinions, horrible and strong,
They battle with me for their usual dole.
Hunggrily barking, a discordant song,
They hang upon the outlets of my mind,
Or on the roof sit patiently and long,
Heavy as autumn clouds, the loathsome kind.
Lord, give me air and light ! I pant for breath !
And Thy sweet residence, once warm and bright,
Is close, confined, and small, and full of night ;
It is clay-cold and damp—it smells of death !
Yet Thou art there !—and where Thou deignest to be,
My blessed Lord, is good enough for me.

V.

OH, what am I, if in this kindness
Of universal nature I can feel
No love, nor, for at least the moment, steal
My hard heart from the tumult and the press !
The sun delights the winter's wounds to heal ;
The rain is busy to support and bless ;
And joyous Earth sings, like a spinning-wheel
Turned by a mother in her happiness !
O comfort, comfort me, thou wondrous height
Of softly-changing sky above my head !
And thou, warm growing ground beneath my feet !
—In vain my supplications I repeat :
In patience let the punishment be sped.
Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?

VI.

A CHRISTIAN poet am I, or would be ;
And must I therefore to the grave go down
Without my singing-honour and my crown ?
What matter ?—if the angel quire for me
Are weaving amaranths with melody ?
Yet could I (so fiends whisper) charm the frown
From Fame's cold brow, and pluck a chaplet down,
If I would bow to deft hypocrisy.
But thanks to Thee, O Lord, who dost enslave
The conquered ill to serve against its kind,
Me from this trial even my pride might save ;
I scorn in any lie to be confined.
And Truth is royal and sets free ;—the grave
Hath but the gaoler's privilege—to bind.

VII.

LORD, I will take no comfort but of Thee.
I had an earthly plant—a pleasant vine,
From whose dear grapes I pressed delightful wine,
That made my heart as merry as could be.
Thine anger hath cut down that cheerful tree ;
Or, at the least, (for yet I but divine)
Thou hast cut off its joyful fruit from me,
And made its precious shade no longer mine.
Shall I then murmur ? If my road henceforth
Lies hot before me, wearisome and bare,
And no green garland, twined among my hair,
Will guard, as it was wont, my tortured eyes,
What then ? The sweeter after this stripped earth
Will be the shady rest of Paradise.

VIII.

O LEAVE thyself to God, and if indeed
'Tis given thee to perform so vast a task,
Think not at all, think not, but kneel and *ask* !
O friend, by thought was never creature freed
From any sin, from any mortal need :
Be patient ! not by thought canst thou devise
What course of life for thee is right and wise ;
It will be written up, and thou wilt read.
Oft like a sudden pencil of rich light,
Piercing the thickest umbrage of the wood,
Will shoot, amidst our troubles infinite,
The Spirit's voice ; oft, like the balmy flood
Of morn, surprise the universal night ,
With glory, and make all things sweet and good !

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